

# ANGLO- SOVIET JOURNAL

## C O N T E N T S

Jenghiz Khan	Ivan Maisky
A Dancer's Tour	Joan Lawson
Civil Law Reform	Ekaterina Fleishits
Art and Technique	Heinrich Neuhaus
Farming Problems	Robert Daglish

## BOOK REVIEWS

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*N. Plisetskaya and D. Begale in Spartacus at the Moscow Bolshoi*

# The ANGLO - SOVIET JOURNAL

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## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>Impressions from a Dance Tour of the USSR . . . . .</b>	Joan Lawson 3
<b>Art and Technique : the Thoughts of a Teacher . . .</b>	Heinrich Neuhaus 9
<b>Old and New in Soviet Agriculture . . . . .</b>	Robert Daglish 12
<b>Jenghiz Khan . . . . .</b>	I. M. Maisky 16
<b>Soviet Historians on Modern Britain . . . . .</b>	Andrew Rothstein 21
<b>The Fundamentals of Soviet Civil Law . . . . .</b>	Ekaterina Fleishits 25
<b>Survey : The Times Literary Supplement . . . . .</b>	D. Durnov 30
<b>Book Reviews . . . . .</b>	34

*Muddled Ecstasy*—W. S. Bailey ; *Puzzling Tone*—D. C. Wallis ; *Armenian Childhood*—Anna Khachadourian ; *Poetry of Georgia*—David M. Lang ; *Digging Up Russia's Past*—Jack Lindsay ; *Socialist Planning in Theory and Practice*—R. Bellamy ; *The Law of Nations*—E. L. Johnson ; *Slavonic Studies*—Andrew Rothstein ; *Stars and Outer Space*—Patrick Moore ; *Lunar Revelation*—G.C.C. ; *Soviet Geography*—P. Davis ; *Tales of Travel*—D. W. Shave ; *How Life Began*—A. G. Morton ; *Physics for Fun*—J. C. Siddons ; *Russian for Mathematicians*—Paul Feltham ; *Maths Circle Reading*—M. P. Meshenberg ; *Heat for Students*—Paul Feltham ; *Introduction to Russian Verse*—Lalia May ; *Educational Analysis*—Deana Levin.

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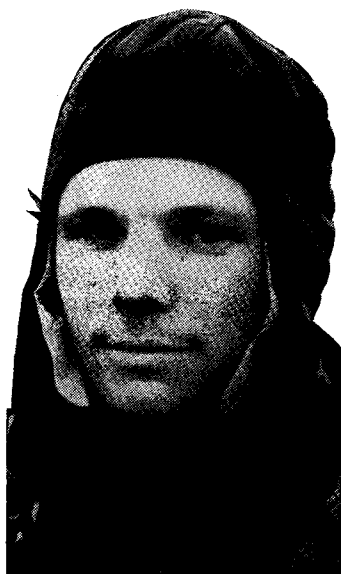
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# IMPRESSIONS OF A DANCE TOUR OF THE USSR

Joan Lawson

Miss Lawson, well known as a teacher and author of textbooks on the dance, recently made an extensive tour of ballet schools and theatres in the Soviet Union, visiting eight major centres of dance activity.

A VISITOR to the USSR privileged to watch any class in classical or folk dance taken by children or students, amateur or professional, as well as concert programmes, rehearsals and performances of ballets, is faced with such a mass of material that it is difficult to know where to begin a report of a seven-week tour. It is even more complicated when the generous time allowed for discussions over specialised technical problems fills one's notebooks with valuable information contributed by dancers, teachers, composers, critics, historians and other experts working in the fields of Soviet traditional dance and ballet. That the material is so voluminous arises from the fact that these arts are in an interesting state of development, and everyone involved in their presentation is anxious to discuss how to produce the contemporary works demanded by the audience. Moreover, it is no longer possible to pretend that by visiting Moscow and Leningrad one knows all about ballet and its schools in the USSR. Already thirty-three companies are flourishing in thirty-one towns (two each in Moscow and Leningrad) and there are twenty state choreographic schools. In addition there are over 100 state dance ensembles and countless amateur classical and folk dance groups in palaces of culture, workers' and pioneers' clubs, factories and schools. Even the Ministry of Culture refused to commit itself on the numbers involved. It might be easier to number those who are not dancers, if one could be sure they did not form part of the enthusiastic audience packing every performance of dance and ballet, which are now firmly established as the most popular genre of the Soviet theatre. I frequently felt that but for the generosity and 'know how' of Natalia Roslavleva (Moscow), Nadya Mokshanchikova (Leningrad) and the other presidents, secretaries and personnel of the various societies for cultural relations I just would not have got into the theatres.

To understand how this mass of dancing material is organised is comparatively easy. The Ministry of Culture defines the general policy to be followed by the Houses of People's Cultural Activities (*Dom narodno tvorchestva*) in each republic ; the amount of subsidy to be allowed the theatres of opera and ballet, etc. ; the building and siting of new theatres, schools, etc. ; the general repertoire of classics ; and systems of teaching the arts involved. It also publishes a yearly list of productions to be available during the next but one season (i.e. the current list embraces the 1963-4 season and will include Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes*). Each House of People's Cultural Activities defines precisely the policy of its own theatres and their repertoire, which is balanced between old and new classics and original ballets. The latter frequently have a national flavour by being based on the particular republic's traditional tales, music, dance and art. The People's House also determines the founding of palaces of culture and clubs in its own region ; the policy and methods used in the institutes and schools for vocational training ; and the work of the philharmonic societies, which are usually responsible for organising the state ensembles of singers, dancers and musicians and the concerts they give, as well as those given by classical artists. The philharmonic societies also work in close



contact with the conservatoires and choreographic schools to preserve and present the traditional arts of their own republics or regions. The theatres and choreographic schools are responsible for the final decisions upon repertoire, and the syllabus and methods for training the personnel needed, as well as their selection.

Personnel for ballet is not always easy to find. The leaders of Soviet ballet, as elsewhere, recognise a dancer when they see one. They make similar medical and artistic tests when selecting candidates for entry into their schools. But the person with the ideal physical qualities of movement, musicality, temperament, expressiveness and ability to accept the stern discipline of classical dance are as rare to find in the USSR as in England. Nevertheless, every possible avenue is explored to discover the right talent, and every child is encouraged to join the dance, so that if there is any ability it will come to light.



A modicum of training of children begins in the kindergarten, where the making of music, easy games and physical exercises are practised together with simple traditional dances. Such activities continue in the ten-year schools, as I found for myself when I joined a lesson for Armenian dance in an Erevan school. The age at which children can begin classical and folk dancing lessons varies. At the Motor Transport Workers' Club in Moscow an excellent children's group, 'The School Year', is directed by Konstantinovskiy, a former soloist with the Moiseyev Ensemble. His 100 boys and 100 girls are divided into three groups aged seven to ten, eleven to fourteen, and fifteen to seventeen. At the Palace of Culture in Kiev, children begin at five, and the three groups are differently divided. However, no child can start the professional nine-year course at any state choreographic school until he or she is nine. There are also older groups which continue the work of the children's classes, as in the Gorky Palace of Culture, Leningrad, with its unique company and fifteen years' experience. All amateur groups usually have three classes a week, embracing two classical and one folk dance lessons; or if they prefer folk dance, each lesson begins with exercises common to both forms.

It is from such groups that dancers are recruited for the state schools, ensembles and ballet companies. Their teachers usually work at the choreographic schools and note any talent. If the parents are willing, auditions are arranged. Talent is also spotted during the many performances in which promising children and teenagers are involved after a year's work. This happened with the brilliant young Vasiliev, who came from the first-named group and is a star with the Bolshoi; Soloviev, who came from the second and is a star with the Kirov; and People's Artist Potapova, a star in Kiev. But they are only three among the many interesting new dancers who have commenced their careers as amateurs.

It is not a difficult step to go from amateur to professional status. The training both receive is based on the same syllabus, usually that of the Vaganova School in Leningrad or the Bolshoi School in Moscow, and each republic's own programme of traditional dance, which is a compulsory subject. But teachers of amateurs have developed valuable ideas of their own in order to bring dancers to the stage earlier in their training than those from the state schools. This does not mean the lowering of standards. 'No one dances *The Dying Swan*, because it is recognised to be one of the highest artistic achievements of Russian dance and only the greatest can attempt it.' Ballets are adapted for amateurs, sometimes by their original choreographers, so that technical difficulties are lessened and the action is shortened; but the content remains the same, and it often happens that character roles are extremely well played. This was the case in the Gorky Palace of Culture's *Mirandolina*, where two engineers, a fitter from the

shipyard, a translator from the Japanese and a student writing his final thesis in biochemistry brought the old *Commedia dell'Arte* plot fully to life.

This ability to bring character to life is the most important element in any Soviet performance. It arises from the fact that most dances and every ballet have a proper idea or subject upon which the dancers can build a role. Konstantinovskiy's programme for 'The School Year' (Moscow) contained items based on such simple themes as 'The School Party', a *melange* of social dances for each of his three groups; a Moldavian spring custom of freeing the birds after winter, and two small boys teasing each other. The programmes of this particular group resemble those of the famous Moiseyev Ensemble, which has just celebrated its twenty-fifth birthday.

Moiseyev's work, however, is changing emphasis. Several items in his new programme show his concern with his ambition to develop a new social dance for Soviet citizens. This new style of urban movement is found in those items classified as 'Sketches of Soviet Life'; it is based on old quadrille forms, but is coloured by lively steps and feats for the boys. Moiseyev has an extraordinary facility for painting, through dance, the characteristics and idiosyncrasies of many types of people, and his ideas have been taken up by other state ensembles, which are more concerned with preserving and developing the traditional dances of their own regions. However, it is to be hoped they will not follow Moiseyev in all the fields he is exploring, because some items into which he introduces the *pointes*—skaters, gipsies (as in any old Soviet ballet) and an impression of America—seem outside his metier. The last is admitted an hilarious but not very tasteful caricature of the 'beat' generation, but it fails because Soviet dancers are incapable of sustaining the necessary air of frustration, and become so energetically purposeful in 'putting across' these ungraceful jerkings and cacophonous row that they are in danger of losing sight of all that the Russian folk and classical dancers stand for in the eyes of the West.

It must be difficult for Moiseyev continually to ring the changes in programmes devoted to stylised people's dances. But it can be done. Both the Byelorussian and Transcarpathian Ensembles present most varied programmes. I saw both of these in Kiev, the latter in an excellent film, and was struck by the quality and interesting ideas behind their dances. They also made a careful balance between the serious, stately items and those with deft touches of humour or spectacular feats. The Transcarpathian group has perhaps the richer repertoire because this region has a greater variety of occupational dances upon which to draw. Its costumes, too, are more artistic, as they are frequently the real article or close copies of the traditional garments.



The most interesting and beautiful traditional dances, however, were those presented specially for me in the three Caucasian republics. I shall ever be indebted to the Georgian, Azerbaijan and Armenian Societies for Cultural Relations for the wonderful way they arranged for me to see these. With true Caucasian hospitality the group at the Transport Workers' Club in Tbilisi, the Azerbaijan State Ensemble, and the group at the Electric Works in Erevan gave of their very best and also allowed me to try for myself. Each of these groups works solely within its own traditions, which have some elements in common as well as being strongly individualistic. In Georgia one notes the men's deference to the women, in Azerbaijan the strong contrast between the men's ruggedness and the women's exquisite grace, and in Armenia the men's challenging air in return to the women's teasing glances. These same differences were to be noted in two other ensembles, the 'Lezginkha' from Daghestan and the group from the Pamirs. With the latter I was suddenly plunged back to England, although I was sitting in the great concert hall of Erevan. Six men danced with

hobby-horses in much the same way as do our own Padstow and Minehead horses, and then danced a version of the morris 'Bean-setting'. These dances did not seem out of place and if they, instead of the girls, had gone into a handkerchief morris I should not have been surprised. It would only have convinced me that the early movements of people carried certain dances throughout the land mass of Asia and Europe, just as the later struggles for power found soldiers, diplomatic circles and refugees exchanging other dances. This was brought home again at a pioneer palace in Riga and the choreographic school in Tallinn, where some of the Latvian and Estonian dances were all but identical with certain English, Irish and Scottish country dances. In fact I even recognised the old tune 'Soldiers' Joy', which has now turned up for me in no fewer than fifteen countries !



I was not concerned only with amateur and professional folk dancers. More than half my visit was spent in the choreographic schools and ballet theatres studying certain technical details of the greatest interest to those who work in English ballet, and also seeing how each company and school varies its methods and productions. The basis of every Soviet repertoire is classics old and new, and I saw a fine *Swan Lake* in Riga as well as a thrilling one in the Palace of Congresses in the Kremlin. Both versions were those of the Kirov and were beautifully danced. The Riga ballerina Velta Viltsin is an exceptionally strong technician and a fine actress. But it was Rimma Karelskaya's marvellously flowing classical dance which displayed that perfection of style as yet unmatched by any of her colleagues in this particular ballet. It is rare to see a classical dancer of this particular type today, and that she should appear in Moscow and not in Leningrad is some measure of the changes made since the brilliant teacher Elizabeth Pavlovna Guerdt and the two great ballerinas Semyonova and Ulanova from Leningrad have taught and rehearsed their Moscow colleagues. It was the Bolshoi production of *Chopiniana* that pleased me most for its exquisite dancing, principally because it was the Fokine version, which they interpreted with subtlety even though some of this was lost on the vast stage of the Palace of Congresses.

*Chopiniana* was one of Fokine's earliest masterpieces, and its revival has inspired other Soviet choreographers to follow his example. Burmeister in Tallinn and Chabukiani in Tbilisi, in their versions, have reverted to Fokine's original idea of showing the composer in search of his muse, and in both they have captured something of the spiritual qualities and expressiveness which are the elements of Fokine's work. But the success of their versions is due more to their dancers' feeling for the music and its relationship to their movements than to the choreographic designs, which are not very inventive. On the other hand Burmeister's and Chabukiani's interpretation of Ravel's *Bolero* are excellent ; the former gains impetus by the increasing number of men dancing to one girl, and the latter by the gathering of couples in various phases of a lovers' meeting culminating in the entrance of Chabukiani himself, dancing as only he can. His work is most varied in design and has a superb set and costumes by Virsaladze.

The problem of choreographic design is worrying Soviet choreographers, and one aspect of it was placed before me in Kiev by Galina Beryozova, director of the choreographic school there. She has set herself and her staff the task of wedding classical and Ukrainian dance in order to produce a contemporary ballet. The first effort will be a children's ballet for the school. I listened to the specially composed score and to the discussion that took place after its rehearsal. The general educational staff, children and students were most complimentary ; they felt the composer had accomplished his task well and given them a score



Ukrainian in spirit, rhythm and melody, and with continuity and development of action. But some of the dancing staff said he gave no opportunities for *pas de deux* and variations essential to any ballet. But in my opinion, and judging by films I saw of ballets by Vronsky (Kiev) and Chabukiani (Tbilisi), the action is too frequently held up by these variations and *pas de deux*, which are not always justified. Moreover, a wedding between classical and folk dance, in the sense that Fokine used in *The Firebird*, was seldom made. Both choreographers usually selected traditional themes in which classical dance could be used for fairyland and folk dance for the mortals. Gamer Almazade in Baku, however, has made a closer integration of the two styles, just as Grigorovich introduced certain elements of Ural dance into his choreography of *The Stone Flower*, which I saw in a lovely performance by the young stars Maximova, Bogomolovskaya, Vasiliev and Peregudov in Moscow.

Grigorovich and Belsky in Leningrad have taken other steps forward by creating a particular style of movement for each ballet created. These two ballet masters are following the work of Lavrovsky in *Romeo and Juliet* by so closely interweaving their mimed dance and danced mime that their ballets are 'all dancing', and there are few of those series of divertissements which other ballet masters add to the content of their dramatic plots. This last was particularly the case with the new Moscow production of *Spartacus*, which was singularly devoid of danced action, although a marvellous spectacle.

*Spartacus* poses several questions now facing ballet masters and dancers. The score by Khachaturyan is apt to the theme, but is it danceable? I found few to agree with me that it is—throughout its length. It has unusual qualities which are valueless to the usual Petipa formulas of building step on step. But the Erevan ballet master, Changa, showed me two *pas de deux* from his version in which he had created a highly dramatic stylised form of plastic dance. This gave his dancers material on which to work and helped them to characterise and develop their roles as well as express emotions. Maya Plisetskaya in Moscow was given nothing upon which to build, and her success as the tragic Phrygia was entirely due to her own efforts as an actress, as was the equally successful performance of Maris Liyepa in the role of *Spartacus*. But *Spartacus* is not the only ballet in which the dancers are given insufficient material, as I noted in other ballets in which the ballet masters used too small a vocabulary and seemed afraid to break away from the classical medium.



Much of the choreographers' conservative use of classical dance is due to their belief in that particular medium as the base of all ballet. History has proved that it has developed and constantly changed with the theatre and the changing tastes of its audience, and has always something fresh to offer. What Plisetskaya performs in *Spartacus* is not on the toes, nor can one recognise a single classroom step, but the principles by which she moves and the exquisite steps and poses she executes stem directly from her superb classical technique, as do the interesting, strongly angular movements in parts of Belsky's *Seventh Symphony* and certain dances in *The Path of Thunder* by the Tallinn ballet master Paari. This ballet was first created by Sergeyev in Leningrad and is an excellent example of the kind of theme Soviet audiences demand. It has an interesting score by Kara Karayev, which calls for a type of utilising African syncopated rhythms, choreography very different from that usually associated with Soviet ballet,

Kara Karayev and Aram Khachaturyan, however, are not the only composers to provide interesting and apt scores for ballet. One of the principal reasons for my visit to Baku was to discover, if possible, why so many composers came from this fine town. The answer was simple. Baku lives an extraordinarily rich musical life. Most of its important musical institutions are led by composers,

all of whom have a lively interest in each other's affairs and co-operate to produce ballets, operas, films, etc. It was during a long discussion with several Azerbaijan composers that I realised how much more thought composers were giving to the development of ballet than many choreographers. This explained some of the puzzling differences I found between the music and its dance content, and why one choreographer could say 'The music is not danceable', a dancer could say 'The music said this to me, but the ballet master gave me nothing with which to say it', and finally a composer could comment: 'He told me it was too long, but I needed that amount of time to make my meaning clear, forgetting that our classical dancers have become so expressive that they need less time than Petipa required to make speeches in conventional gesture.'

That last remark is the crux of the matter. Soviet dancers everywhere, through their rapidly developing methods of training, have become actresses and actors in dance. What they now need are new ballets with a style and form of their own, and a subject worthy of being communicated through the medium originated by Gorsky and Fokine and brought through Zakharov to that high point of artistry achieved by Lavrovsky in *Romeo and Juliet*. His mimed dance and danced mime, together with the new ideas formulated by Grigorovich and Belsky in classical dance and by Moiseyev and similar ballet masters in folk dance, should prove the most valuable materials upon which to build the contemporary ballets promised for the stage in the immediate future. Many plans have been laid, and my various hosts all said: 'Come again next year, and you will see how much fresh air has blown through the ballet.' I eagerly await that next visit.

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# ART AND TECHNIQUE: *The thoughts of a teacher*

Heinrich Neuhaus

Professor Neuhaus has had a long and distinguished career at the Moscow Conservatory and as a concert pianist. His most famous pupils are Emil Gilels and Svyatoslav Richter. Professor Neuhaus has distilled his great experience in a book (not yet translated from the Russian), 'Art of Piano Playing'. Our article is taken from this book, where it was entitled 'In Lieu of a Preface'.

TO start with, a few simple observations.

1. Before beginning to study any sort of instrument, the student, whether child, youth or adult, should already have some feeling for music: that is to say, have it in his head, in his soul and in his ear. The whole secret of talent and genius lies in the music being fully alive in the brain before he even touches the keys or draws the bow across the strings. That is why the child Mozart could play the piano and the violin straight off.

2. Every performance obviously consists of three basic elements—the work performed (the music), the performer, and the instrument—in which the performance is embodied. Only complete mastery of these three elements, especially of the music, can ensure a good artistic performance. The simplest example of a three-element performance is, of course, the performance of a pianoforte work by a solo pianist, or a sonata for solo violin, violoncello, etc.

These simple things must be emphasised because exaggeration one way or another, so common in teaching, will invariably cause one of the three elements to suffer ; and this is particularly regrettable in the case of a lack of appreciation of the content, that is of the music itself, the 'artistic image' as it is called, while all the attention is concentrated on technical mastery of the instrument. Another mistake, much rarer in instrumentalists, consists in under-estimating the enormously difficult task of properly mastering the instrument in favour of the music itself, in other words stressing musical development at the expense of professional technique ; this also inevitably leads to imperfect 'musical' playing, to a touch of dilettantism, an absence of the necessary professional approach.

3. A few words about technique. The clearer the aim (content, music, perfection of performance) the clearer the means to attain it. This axiom needs no proof. The goal determines the method, although in the last resort the method determines the goal (law of dialectics). In my lessons my method is briefly to make the player, after a preliminary acquaintance with the rough mastery of the work, discover for himself as quickly as possible what we call the 'artistic image', that is the content, the meaning, the poetic essence of the music, and gain a thorough understanding from a musical and theoretical point of view of what he is trying to do. This is a clearly defined aim, and gives the player a chance to work towards it, to achieve it, to embody it in his performance—and all of this is a question of technique.

As I often mention 'content' as the chief, hierarchical principle of performance and foresee that the word 'content' (or 'artistic image' or 'poetic meaning', etc.) may irritate the young pianist by its constant repetition, I have imagined his possible objection to it : 'You talk of nothing but "content" upon "content" ! Well, if I can play all the thirds, sixths, octaves and the other difficult bits in Brahms's *Variations on a Theme by Paganini* properly, and do not forget about music either, my "content" will be all right ; but if I strum and play badly there'll be no "content" at all.'

Absolutely right ! Golden words ! A clever writer has said of writers : 'To

improve style means to improve thought. If anyone does not immediately agree with this there's no hope for him ! ' That is the true understanding of technique (or style) ! I often remind my pupils that the word technique comes from the Greek word *techni*, which means—art. Any improvement in technique is improvement in art itself, and so helps to bring out the content, the hidden meaning ; in other words, it is the material, the real essence of art. The trouble is that many piano-players mean by ' technique ' only dexterity, speed, smoothness, bravura, sometimes just ' flash and fuss ', which are separate elements of technique, but not technique as a whole as the Greeks understood it and as a real artist understands it. Technique—*techni*—is something much more complicated and difficult.

Mastery of such qualities as dexterity and accuracy, even of competent musical performance and so on, still does not of itself ensure an artistic performance, which can be achieved only by real, thoroughly inspired work. That is why with very gifted people it is so difficult to draw an exact line between work on technique and work on the music (even if they happen to repeat the same passage 100 times). There is no difference here. The old saying ' Repetition is the mother of learning ' is the rule, both for the weakest and the strongest talent ; in this sense all of them are in the same position, although the results of their work, of course, are different. It is well known that Liszt used to repeat some specially difficult passage 100 times. When Svyatoslav Richter first played me Prokofiev's *Ninth Sonata*, which is dedicated to him, I could not help noticing that one very difficult, very fast, polyphonic passage (some ten bars in all, in the third part) was very well played, and he told me : ' Well, I practised that passage for two hours non-stop.' That is the right method, as it gives the best result, which the pianist set out to achieve at once, without putting it off to another day.

Once, when talking to a pupil who was not working well and was wasting a lot of unnecessary time, I resorted to the following everyday metaphor : just imagine you want to boil a kettle of water ; you put the kettle on the fire and do not take it off until the water boils. But what you do is to raise the temperature, then turn off the gas and busy yourself with something else till you suddenly remember the kettle ; by that time the water has got cold, so you begin all over again and do this several times until in the end you are bored by it ; but you never spend the time necessary at one go to make the water boil, with the result that you are both wasting a lot of time and considerably lowering your ' working tone '.

Mastery of a work, one of the truest criteria of the maturity achieved by a pianist, is characterised by a direct approach and the faculty of not wasting time in any way. The more will, steadfastness of purpose and care shown in this process, the more effective will be the result ; the greater the passivity and inertia, the longer will be the time taken to master a work, and interest in it will almost invariably be weakened. All this is well known, but is worth while recalling.

4. In order to speak and have the right to be heard, we should not only be able to speak, but above all have something to say. This is as simple as twice two are four, yet it is not difficult to show that hundreds and thousands of performers are continually sinning against this rule.

A certain scholar once said that everybody could speak well in Greece and write well in France. And yet we can count on our fingers the really great Greek orators and French writers, and they are the only ones who interest us today. Anton Rubinstein used to say, not without a shade of secret regret, that nowadays ' everybody ' can play well. Well, what of it ? It is not such a bad thing : better for ' everybody ' to play well than badly. But Rubinstein's words, with their wry and sceptical implication, have by no means lost their significance for us.

FROM my childhood right up to the present I have had the same feeling whenever I came across the work of a very great man, be he writer, poet, musician, artist—Tolstoy, Pushkin, Beethoven or Michelangelo. I was sure that it was important for me, first and foremost, that this man was great, that I was seeing an immense human being through his art, and to a certain extent it made no difference to me whether he expressed himself in prose or verse, in marble or sound. When I was fifteen I felt sorry that Beethoven had never turned his music into philosophy, for I thought that such philosophy would be deeper, truer, more humane and therefore better than Kant's or Hegel's (I need hardly say that at that time I knew very little about Kant, less about Hegel, and a good deal about Beethoven).

I will mention here one of the childish notions that occurred to me about the same time as the views expressed above. Pondering on the mutual relationship and contradiction between art and science, I somehow came to the conclusion that mathematics and music were at the opposite poles of the human spirit, that the whole of man's creative and spiritual activity was limited and defined by these two antipodes, and that between them lay everything mankind had created in the field of science and art. The idea so intrigued me that I started writing a treatise about it. At first I even thought I was airing some new theories, not without interest, but I very soon came to the proper conclusion that I had very little knowledge, and that my mind was ill-trained ; and so it was no use trying to 'open up' such a psychological and, possibly, gnosiological subject. Of this unfinished and, incidentally, lost booklet it can only be said in the words of Phœbe in Pushkin's epigram : 'The desire is there, but not the brains. . . . The birch-rod's the thing !' I have mentioned these childish notions because (and here I crave the reader's indulgence) it still seems to me even now that mathematics and music are the two poles of the human spirit, and perhaps if my life had turned out differently I might have gone on thinking about this theme and developing it.

And yet, though it was only childish fantasy, there is a grain of truth in it, and I mention it here because now, with my vast teaching experience behind me, I know only too well how often even gifted pupils, who are equal to their tasks, have no conception of what great phenomena of the human spirit they are dealing with. It is clear that this will not promote the artistry of their performance, and they will stick at the level of a good craftsman in the best sense of the term.

But when you read the word 'great', do not suspect me of following Carlyle in his *Heroes and Hero-Worship*. The old theory of the hero and the crowd is dead along with many illusory ideas from the past ; we know only too well that the so-called great man is just as much a product of his age as any other ; but we also know that such a 'product', if he is called Pushkin or Mozart, belongs to the most precious things that our sinful earth has ever borne. Moreover, such a 'product' is the creation of galaxies or atomic nuclei. In saying this, I want to stress how important it is to impress on a pupil from the very outset what precious material he will be dealing with during his life if he will only really give himself up to the service of art. I am always filled with a sense of awe when I explain to my pupils the works of genius of great musicians, and we try together, as best we can, to probe their depths, to penetrate their mysteries, to understand their laws, to rise to their heights. I know that this feeling of awe and the joy that goes with it—joy through being aware of it—constitute the whole meaning of my life, and make me work much harder as a teacher than I am strictly obliged to do and to sacrifice myself without the least feeling of regret.



# OLD AND NEW IN SOVIET AGRICULTURE

Robert Daglish

**I**F you drive through the Kuban countryside as I did recently and see those rich fields already turning to ripeness under the hot sun of early June, you cannot help falling under the spell of its fertility. The black earth breathes moistly in the heat and the yellowing ears of corn sway with a motion that looks like growing. It is good to relax under the cherry trees round some collective farmer's thatch cottage, listen to a tractor chugging in the distance and read Gogol, thinking how far the Russian *troika* has whirled ahead since the days of Chichikov. Yet even this super-fertile area, so last winter's agricultural conferences have told us, is producing only a third of what it could produce if more efficient farming methods were used.

A revolution in methods and management is sweeping through Soviet agriculture. It has been made necessary not only to meet the present urgent demands of a rapidly growing population for food and of industry for raw materials : Soviet agriculture must become far more efficient and productive if it is to supply the twofold and threefold increases required for the abundance the USSR aims at achieving within the next ten years. What the Soviet Union now has to do is to make her present large-scale agriculture, of state and collective farms, produce as intensively as much smaller countries like Denmark.

Are the measures taken over the past few years adequate to bring this about ? Anyone who has any experience of farming would hesitate to predict, but at least the recent conferences on agriculture in all parts of the country offer a much better chance than we have had up to now of getting the history of Soviet agriculture into perspective and seeing how significant the new approach is.

In 1894 two lecturers at the Moscow Institute of Agriculture (now the Timiryazev Academy) politely agreed to exchange subjects. Their names were Williams and Pryannishnikov. Pryannishnikov, an agricultural chemist, had been asked to lecture on the cultivation of meadowland, Williams was to teach fertilisers. ' V. R. Williams ', Pryannishnikov, who died in 1948, wrote in his memoirs, ' was not at all interested in fertilisers and even regarded them with some scepticism, claiming there was enough of everything in the soil. It need only be cultivated properly and no fertilisers would be necessary. Even manure, he claimed, was applied not for the sake of its nitrogen, phosphorous and potash, the quantity of these substances it contained being negligible, but purely for the effect of organic matter on soil structure.'

Both men lived long lives in the service of their country's agriculture, and both died possessing the many honours the socialist state could confer on them. In fact, Pryannishnikov, who outlived Williams by nine years, had even more titles, including the Order of Lenin, to his credit than Williams. Yet it was Williams's system that dominated Soviet farming for nearly twenty years after his death. Williams's monopoly of agricultural education became so complete that post-war students knew little of the controversy. Farming textbooks (the Academy has now promised they will be rewritten) are mute on the subject of Pryannishnikov's opposition to grassland cultivation as the sole means of improving the soil. Yet Pryannishnikov's criticism in the thirties was quite outspoken.

' The grass-arable rotation system ', he wrote, ' must not be considered the one indispensable system of agriculture. For us it is of secondary importance compared with other types of rotation.' He went on to warn that the wholesale adoption of Williams's system would lead to a reduction of the area under corn.

Now that the spotlight of criticism has been turned on Williams's teaching,

how easy it is to dismiss him as a crank and those who supported him as fools or even rogues. Yet to the agriculturists of the thirties Williams's case must have seemed [v]ery strong indeed and Williams himself nothing if not a serious scientist, one of the eminent men of science who was enthusiastically putting his knowledge and experience into the building of a new type of agriculture. In spite of all he has said against Williams's theories, Khrushchov tells us : ' He was a Communist and, so I consider, devoted to the Party and an honest man.'

After a brilliant graduation at Moscow in 1887, Williams, the son of a Moscow engineer, went to Paris to study microbiology under Pasteur, moving to Munich in 1891 to work in the laboratory of the German soil scientist Martin Wollny. In 1903 he was experimenting on various types of soils with lysimeters and by 1894 had laid out a nursery that was to contain one of the world's largest collections of perennial grasses (some 3,000 species). His principal works are *Soil Science* (1914-24), *General Agriculture* (two volumes, 1919 and 1922) and *General Agriculture and the Fundamentals of Soil Science* (1927).\*

No scientific outlook can be expressed in a paragraph, but the essence of Williams's theoretical teaching was that the soil is a derivative of life. The more life present on any part of the planet, the higher the fertility of the soil there and the greater the supply of food, the key to the formation of soil in all cases being plant life. Any contemporary soil deprived of plant life would in a few years lose its fertility and become utterly barren.

It is easy to see in this conception the root of Williams's faith in the essential self-sufficiency of the soil. The conditions of farming he faced in the twenties were the only incentive he needed to develop his theory on practical lines. There was no chemical industry. There were huge tracts of land that for the first time in history could be cultivated systematically on a huge scale. How could their native fertility be improved ? To Williams the obvious answer was grass.

The *travopolye* system that Williams devised is often translated into English as 'ley farming'. This is confusing when one thinks of the success the system pioneered by Professor Gilchrist had on British farms during the war, and has had since. Actually Williams's system had much wider implications, mainly because it was designed to embrace the whole of Soviet agriculture. For all Soviet farms Williams laid down three categories into which the land should be divided—watersheds and hilltops, sloping land, and valley bottoms. The hilltops should be kept wooded to provide windbreaks, husband moisture, and so on. For the slopes a more or less conventional rotation of tillage crops was stipulated. All valley land, however, was to be cultivated in two periods, a 'meadowland period' of six to seven years, during which it was planted to various perennial grasses, followed by a 'field period' of similar length for the rotation of tillage crops (vegetables or cotton, flax, spring wheat, etc.). Williams allowed a certain flexibility in the amount of land to be allotted to each category ('always bearing in mind the demands of the state plan for various products'). But his insistence on the value of grass for improving the structure of any kind of land and his promises of the harvest this improved structure would bring were put across with such vigour and confidence that he carried the whole of officialdom, including Stalin, with him. His prestige was further increased by the real value to town-bred chairmen of collective farms and former landless peasants of his encyclopædic knowledge of all kinds of practical farming matters, from the scientifically correct time to cut clover ('before the sexual act of flowering wasted fifty per cent of the protein') to the choice of seed mixtures.

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\*My summary of his views is based on the selected works published by Moskvosky Rabochi in 1948.—R.D.

Unfortunately Williams appears to have been wrong about the very thing he thought himself most correct—the benefit to be derived from planting perennial grasses on any soil in the USSR. What might have proved a useful technique in certain areas had a paralysing effect on agriculture when applied to all parts of the country. For this Williams must bear much of the blame. Those of his contemporaries who saw that he was merely making a virtue of necessity and proposed other methods of achieving a satisfactory soil structure, though not necessarily Williams's ideal moisture-holding tilth of lumps 2-10mm. in diameter, were imperiously brushed aside. Academician Tulaikov of the Volga country, who insisted that better results could be obtained with cultivators and rollers and raised bumper crops in the dry soil around Saratov to prove it, was actually declared an 'enemy of the people'. Pryannishnikov, who by 1936 had visited nearly every country in western Europe and was campaigning vigorously in the Soviet Union for the development of fertilisers, received a furious letter from Williams demanding to know 'which side of the barricades' he was on.

One of the difficulties of Williams's system was that it could not be tested on a broad scale in much less than about fifteen to twenty years. To some extent this explains the fact that even as late as 1961, after *travopolye* had been emphatically criticised by the Party in 1954, out of a total of about 550,000,000 acres of arable 160,000,000 were still planted to grass or oats or lying fallow, and in the central Russian zone the proportion was even higher—forty-four per cent. In many cases the evidence against the grassland system that is now being published has been produced by men who lost their jobs for several years, and were only able to continue experimenting in the fifties. No one can say Williams's ideas were not given a fair trial or that the present trend is merely a scientific *volte-face*.

These are the kinds of facts that are coming to light. G. Nalivaiko, for instance, director of the Altai Institute of Agricultural Research, writes that the 'black earth' area of the Ob, when ploughed up after years of sowing to perennial grasses, though apparently of good structure, tends to cake after the first rains. The soils in the foothills of the Altai have a well-defined structure and contain up to fifteen per cent of organic matter. Whether sown to perennial grasses or not the percentage of moisture-retentive elements remains high. But although the area has a moderate rainfall (about twenty-eight inches) lack of rain for ten to twelve days can cause a dangerous drought. In the Kulundinsky steppe, however, where the soil is practically structureless and the annual rainfall never more than ten inches, crops do not die even when there is no rain for months, and two or three rains assure a good harvest. This complex picture of the 'black earth' soils of Siberia is very different from the simple pattern Williams relied on.

During the December conferences much was said about the possibility of growing maize, even in northerly areas of the country. Khrushchov declared that if the twenty-one per cent of arable under grass in the fertile Kuban area had been planted to maize even an average yield would have meant an extra 4,000,000 tons of grain for the harvest, thus trebling the amount of grain that could have been sold to the state in that area in 1961. Even this, he said, was not the limit, for an area as fertile as this could probably be made to yield two harvests by planting early crops like peas. Proportionately large crops could be obtained in other parts of the country if the old adherence to grassland were abandoned. But despite his well-known enthusiasm for maize-growing he drew attention to an extremely sober speech by Lysenko, who had pointed out that crops with a high biological potential usually required extremely careful cultivation to convert that potential into high yield. Another warning note has been sounded by Mr. Roswell Garst, the American maize-grower, who is a personal

friend of Mr. Khrushchov's. Not long ago he stated that the capital investment per man in American agriculture was twice the capital investment per man in American industry. Have these two vital factors been taken into account in the Party's new plan for agriculture ?

At the agricultural conference in Kiev last December a group of collective farm chairmen asked Khrushchov: 'What is a collective farm chairman to do about revising the pattern of his sowing area if the district authorities have already given him definite figures for the sowing of all crops in 1962?' The answer was that the authorities were in the wrong. They could now only send out orders for certain amounts of produce. How much a farm sowed and when and where it sowed now depended on its chairman and his knowledge of what his land would produce and in what quantities. Among the numerous organisational functions of the new territorial agricultural production boards the one that is most stressed is the provision of expert advice and contact between farms and research institutes. It is specifically stated that the boards' 'inspector-organisers' must not seek to usurp the authority of collective farm chairmen and directors of state farms, who retain the right of making the final decision on all matters of management on their farms. Unlike the departments of the old Ministry of Agriculture (structurally unchanged, according to Khrushchov, since 1894) these new bodies will be on the spot and able to work with an intimate knowledge of the areas they supervise.

Over the past six months the boards have shown that they can help to get this done and are not merely the 'gimmick' the *Daily Telegraph* called them. The crop-sowing figures for 1962, released at the meeting of production board representatives at the end of June, show that just short of an additional 20,000,000 acres have been planted to maize and sugar beet in the Russian Federation alone. If the harvest is good the fodder from these crops will go a long way to producing the extra 500,000 tons slaughter-house weight of meat that is the Federation's target this season.

As for the question of investment, I do not think anyone in the Soviet Union today has any doubt that this is being treated seriously. For a government with a record of steady and falling prices since 1947 it must have been a hard decision to take to raise the retail prices of meat and butter twenty to thirty per cent. But unless the collective farmer gets a better return for his work he cannot be expected to produce more, and without increased profits the farms cannot build the sheds and buy the machinery they need for intensive dairy and meat farming. The rise of prices in the shops and the corresponding increase in the amount the state will pay for farm products sets the seal of realism on a policy that promises a notable improvement in food production in the near future.

# JENGHIZ KHAN

I. M. Maisky

THE personality of Jenghiz Khan has invariably given rise to sharp disputes and differences of opinion throughout the eight centuries since his birth, and these disputes have in fact not been completely overcome to this day.

The period of Jenghiz Khan's rule was an extremely complex and dynamic one. In the latter part of the twelfth century various Mongolian tribes occupied a vast territory in Central Asia. In the preceding centuries the Mongols' social structure presented a picture of a primitive communal system, but towards the close of the twelfth century the system had outlived itself and was gradually being superseded by early forms of feudalism. Steadily gaining in wealth and power, the aristocratic families formed the so-called *nukers* (detachments of warriors), seized power in their native tribes, thus forming the upper class of *noyons*, and became the exploiters of rank-and-file tribesmen. The pasture lands belonging to each individual clan and constituting collective property of the commune were gradually turned into the private property of the *noyons* to the detriment of the poor. Having taken possession of the nomad camps and pastures, the *noyons* reduced the broad mass of the small cattle-breeders to the status of *arats* (i.e. men completely dependent on the *noyons* and therefore compelled to work for them, notably herding their cattle. Thus a class society with its inevitable concomitant—the class struggle—was taking shape.

Parallel with this a sharp struggle was going on within the *noyon* class—a struggle between individual aristocratic families for wealth and power, in the course of which struggle some emerged victorious and others suffered defeat. Although the struggle within the aristocracy played a role far less significant than that between the aristocracy and the *arats*, it nevertheless laid its imprint on the general situation.

Nomad cattle-breeding constituted the economic foundation of Mongolian society during that period, but there had already appeared rudiments of handicraft production. Mongolian trade was still non-existent; all commercial transactions were concentrated in the hands of Uigur and Moslem merchants from Central Asia and East Turkestan. There was no agriculture, and the Mongols' food consisted of meat and dairy products.

The following facts give some idea of the Mongols' cultural level at the end of the twelfth century: they had no written language of their own (one tribe, the Naimans, was able to use Uigur characters), Shamanism was the main religion and only comparatively small groups professed Buddhism and Nestorian Christianity. The position of Mongol women was considerably better than that of the women of other nationalities. Marriages between the members of one and the same clan were strictly forbidden. Abduction of brides was very widespread.

With the consolidation of the feudal system there developed a tendency towards the emergence of larger tribal associations called *ulusi*, which were ruled by a single khan. Some of the *ulusi* became so powerful that they were no longer satisfied with the struggle within Mongolia and marched out to conquer foreign lands.

All this convincingly proves that by the end of the twelfth century Mongolia had gone through a process of profound economic, social and political change consisting, essentially, in the transition from a primitive communal to an early feudal system. This process had gone hand in hand with the rise and development of Mongolian nationhood and statehood. The nascent Mongolian state was ruled by the young, vigorous and rapidly developing feudal class. The very



march of events paved the way for the rapid ascent of a big chieftain belonging to this class and capable of giving final shape and form to the trends of development latent in the existing social-economic relations. It fell to the lot of Jenghiz Khan to become such a chieftain.

Leaving aside the lays and legends woven around Jenghiz Khan's life throughout the centuries, we may cite the following basic facts about him. Temuchin (subsequently given the name of Jenghiz Khan) was born on the banks of the river Onon and belonged to the big Taichiut tribe. His father, Yesukai, was a prominent *noyon* standing at the head of a large *ulus* (dominion). Temuchin was thirteen years old when his father fell in battle. After Yesukai's death his *ulus* fell apart, the *nukers* fled and the *noyon's* family found itself in a difficult position. For several years Temuchin roamed from one nomad camp to another, but as he grew older he began to enjoy the patronage of Wan Khan, chief of the Kerait tribe, who helped him to enhance his position. Already in this early period had Temuchin demonstrated his outstanding military talent. Having scored a number of brilliant victories over rival feudal lords, he gradually extended his power over other tribes and became the most powerful ruler. In 1206 the *noyons* of his kingdom convened a *khural* (assembly) on the banks of the Onon and proclaimed Temuchin the supreme khan of all the Mongols. It was at this assembly that he adopted the name and title of Jenghiz Khan. Thus Temuchin became the supreme ruler of all Mongolian tribes. At the same time there emerged a single Mongolian state of an early feudal type, despotically ruled by Jenghiz Khan. At about the same time Jenghiz Khan gave final shape and form to the military organisation and internal structure of this state. At the turn of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries this was undoubtedly a fact of great progressive significance.

After 1206, and especially after 1211, there began a new period in the activity of Jenghiz Khan and in the history of his Mongolian state—a period of great conquests which continued to the time of his death (in 1227), and later under his successors. It was no longer a matter of uniting the Mongolian nation or of creating a national Mongolian state, but of conquering foreign lands and plundering their wealth in the interests of the *noyon* class. Jenghiz Khan's expansion proceeded in two main directions—southward and westward.

His southward expansion signified a fierce struggle against China. This country was then divided into two states—the state of Chin in the north ruled by the invading Churjen tribes, and the state of Sung in the south ruled by the Chinese. The Churjen conquerors, who were hated by the indigenous population, were unable to withstand Jenghiz Khan's attack and by 1215 had surrendered a considerable part of their territory to the Mongols. Their capital, Yenking (the modern Peking), was looted and burned to ashes.

The expansion in the west which began in 1219 was directed in the main against Bokhara, Samarkand, Kharesm and adjacent countries, all of which were conquered. Mohammed, the shah of Kharesm, fled to Iran and died on a small island in the Caspian Sea. His son, Jelal-ed-Din, fled to India. Pursuing Jelal-ed-Din, the Mongol troops invaded north-west India and would probably have penetrated into the interior of that country had it not been for the strong resistance they encountered on the banks of the Indus. The Mongols were forced to retreat, and this put an end to their aggression against India.

Simultaneously with this, another group outflanked the Caspian Sea from the south and invaded Azerbaijan and Georgia, advancing to the North Caucasus and then to the Crimea. In 1223 they routed the Russian princes on the banks of the Kalka River. After this victory the Mongols returned to their native land in 1225. A year later Jenghiz Khan undertook his last campaign against Hsi-Hsia, destroyed that state, and died in 1227 on his way home.

Notwithstanding the great conquests made by Jenghiz Khan and his suc-

cessors, they did not succeed (nor could they succeed, considering the level of economic development prevailing at that time) in establishing a stable world empire. Very soon it began to fall apart, this process being immensely accelerated by the fact that the overwhelming majority of the peoples in it had been compelled to join it by coercion and violence ; they hated the Mongol rule and were only waiting for an opportune moment to get rid of it.

Parallel with this the policy of endless conquests had an adverse influence on the destinies of Mongolia itself. Jenghiz Khan and his military clique diverted the forces of the young Mongolian state to the prosecution of aggressive wars, thereby greatly hampering the possibility of applying its creative energy to the solution of the progressive tasks confronting the Mongolian people in the twelfth century.

Contemporary historians have repeatedly sought an explanation for Jenghiz Khan's outstanding military success, and the majority of them have concluded that this success should be attributed to the exceptional military genius, even super-genius, of the Mongolian chieftain.

Needless to say, from the point of view of Marxism-Leninism this explanation of Jenghiz Khan's successes will not stand up to criticism. But this does not mean, of course, that the Mongol leader's personality did not play an important part in the stormy events of those distant years. On the contrary, all the historical evidence convincingly indicates that Jenghiz Khan was an outstanding military leader and statesman of his time, that he laid a definite imprint on the Mongolian state founded by him in 1206, on the organisation of the Mongolian armed forces, on Mongol military art and on the forms and character of the wars waged by the Mongols in the thirteenth century. However, a correct appraisal of Jenghiz Khan's personality should be based on a clear historical perspective and a sober approach in historical facts.

What are the most salient manifestations of Jenghiz Khan's personal influence? They can be found, first and foremost, in the internal organisation of the Mongolian state, which made possible its military successes in Asia and Europe. Many elements of this organisation, of course, had gradually taken shape prior to Jenghiz Khan, but its final consummation was effected by the Mongol leader himself. There is not sufficient space to give here a detailed description of the Mongolian empire as it took shape at the beginning of the thirteenth century ; hence we shall confine our description to the most important and essential aspects

The state founded by Jenghiz Khan was one of the early feudal type, with many survivals of the tribal system. Administratively, it strove to take these tribal elements into account to the maximum possible degree. The administrative aspect usually coincided with the military one. The country was divided into 'tens', 'hundreds', 'thousands' and 'ten thousands' ('ten thousand' being called *tumen*), i.e. into territorial-tribal units ruled by the bigger and lesser *noyons*. In the event of war each territorial-tribal unit had to send a definite number of warriors to the Great Khan and was named after the number of men in the respective levies, forming units of ten, a hundred, a thousand and ten thousand men. This 'tribal aspect' cemented the Mongol military units and greatly enhanced their fighting efficiency compared with the armies of Jenghiz Khan's adversaries, which were formed by highly developed feudal states and consisted either of mercenaries or of bodyguards formed by independent princes and rent by internal discord. This was one of the most important causes of Jenghiz Khan's military success.

Another important factor was the strict discipline maintained by Jenghiz Khan in both the civil and military spheres. A graphic illustration of this is provided by the excerpts preserved from the *Great Yasa* (fundamental law).

The *Great Yasa* provided, for instance, under penalty of death, that a *noyon*

could appeal only to the emperor, and if the emperor entrusted the meting out of punishment to a common warrior the *noyon* was obliged to surrender to this warrior and drop on his knees before him even if the punishment was death. The *noyons* were also obliged to send their daughters to the emperor every year in order to enable him to choose wives for himself and for his children.

The death penalty was also inflicted for such crimes as the sheltering of a fugitive slave or captive, a large theft, fornication, deliberate lying, witchcraft, the third bankruptcy of a merchant, a wrong method of killing an animal for food, etc.

Especially characteristic were the provisions relating to the army and war. Any negligence on the part of a warrior was liable to severe punishment, including the death penalty. The women accompanying troops were required to perform the duties of men when the latter were engaged in battle. Before leading their men into battle high-ranking military leaders were obliged personally to inspect their troops and armaments down to the minutest details and to remove all shortcomings and defects. Thus an exceptionally strict discipline was maintained in the army.

Jenghiz Khan's military art was a combination of weapons and politics. When preparing for war against one state or another, he carefully studied its internal position, showing particular interest in the existence of diverse groupings and in the struggles between individual members of the ruling circle, noblemen, dignitaries, etc. With the aim of improving contact between his capital and the borderlands of his empire he instituted a post-messenger service (*urtons*). He greatly strengthened his army by conducting a ruthless campaign against drunkenness. He also proclaimed unrestricted religious tolerance, which was bound to weaken the resistance of the population in the countries against which he launched his aggressive wars. He attacked his enemy simultaneously from different sides, thus compelling him to disperse his forces. He erected a rampart around a besieged city and completely devastated its suburbs. He demolished city fortifications with the help of missile engines and battering-rams, with which he had become acquainted during his Chinese campaign. A captured city was usually looted by his warriors and then reduced to ashes. All armed inhabitants were severely manhandled and all able-bodied citizens were driven off into slavery. Jenghiz Khan devastated fertile fields and flourishing orchards, destroyed palaces, shrines, dwellings and irrigation systems. Flourishing areas were turned into deserts and centres of wealth and culture into lifeless ruins. Even in the brutal conditions prevailing in the thirteenth century Jenghiz Khan's wanton destruction was something out of the ordinary. Nor was this by any means accidental ; ruthless terror against vanquished peoples constituted one of the principal methods of his strategy.

These facts make it perfectly clear that Jenghiz Khan was an outstanding statesman and military leader and that his personal talent would, under any conditions, have ensured him a number of important victories over his neighbours—both immediate and distant. But to become a world conqueror and the founder of a vast empire stretching from the Yellow to the Black Sea—how could that have come about, and why ?

The secret should be sought not in the vaunted super-genius of Jenghiz Khan but in Mongolia's economic, political and military environment at the beginning of the thirteenth century. This environment consisted of a motley and friable conglomerate of countries and nations, the majority of which were in the stage of mature feudalism. It was marked chiefly by a profound dispersion of forces and the extreme difficulty of uniting them in the struggle against Jenghiz Khan and his young, powerful state. This was clearly demonstrated in the example of China, Khoresm, Bokhara and Russia.

In those rare cases when the Mongols encountered serious resistance from

the local forces they came to a halt and retreated. A vivid illustration of this is provided by the failure of their Indian campaign in 1221. The Mongols retreated from India and made no attempt to return.

Thus Jenghiz Khan's remarkable military success should be attributed not so much to his own strength as to the weakness of his adversaries. This historical example is by no means an exception. Similar cases occurred before his time and later.

In the fifth century the western Roman Empire was conquered by the so-called 'barbarians' belonging mainly to Germanic tribes. These 'barbarians' did not have their own Jenghiz Khan and none of their chieftains and military leaders left any noticeable trace in history. Nevertheless they succeeded in vanquishing and destroying an ancient and highly cultured state. Why? For the simple reason that the western Roman Empire at that time was in a state of profound internal decay and could not put up any serious resistance to the invaders.

Or take another example. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, 300 years after Jenghiz Khan, the Spanish conquistadores launched their campaign of conquest in Central and South America. Their forces were quite insignificant, totalling several thousand men, and there were no brilliant military leaders among them, yet within a few years they had seized the vast empires of the Aztecs (present-day Mexico), the Incas (present-day Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador and part of Colombia), the Araucanians (now Chile), etc., and actually enslaved their populations. How are we to explain this? A definite part, of course, was played by the fact that the Spaniards had a higher level of civilisation than the American Indians and possessed firearms, but this was not the chief reason. The Spaniards were so insignificant in number and the number of guns and cannon at their disposal was so small that the Aztecs or the Incas, whose cultural development was comparatively high at that time, could have destroyed the invaders without much effort—if they had been united. It was precisely lack of unity that determined their defeat. As a result the vast and fabulously rich territory, whose size was practically equal to that of Jenghiz Khan's empire, was conquered by a few thousand adventurers for the benefit of the ruling classes of Spain and Portugal.

One more illustration. On the threshold of the seventeenth century, England, then a small and poor island state, embarked on the path of overseas expansion. The world at that time was not yet divided among a few giant colonial powers. In a protracted struggle England broke the naval might of Holland, Spain and Portugal, her chief rivals. Then England herself became the mistress of the seas. This opened the road to colonial conquests. In the course of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the ruling class of England, resorting to outright plunder, cunning, deceit, bribery and weapons, created a giant empire scattered all over the world. What were the factors that made this possible? Was the beginning for such development laid by some English Jenghiz Khan? Nothing of the kind! The history of the establishment of the British Empire does not know a single real 'hero' even in the bourgeois meaning of that term. The British ruling class succeeded in its conquests only because it was historically 'lucky': it came out with its claim at a moment when the entire world situation facilitated its enrichment. And when imperialist Germany made an attempt to duplicate the British example three centuries later the international situation had changed so radically that the attempt ended in disaster for Germany.

We could cite many more examples of this kind, but it is hardly necessary. The foregoing facts and considerations give a sufficiently clear picture of the true nature of Jenghiz Khan's success.

To sum up, then, Jenghiz Khan was undoubtedly an outstanding and

exceptionally gifted military leader and statesman. There are two basic periods in his history.

In the first period, which ended in 1206, he played a positive role and made an immense contribution to the unification of the Mongols and the creation of the first Mongolian state of an early feudal type. In the second period, beginning after 1206, Jenghiz Khan played a negative role when he adopted the path of endless conquests of foreign lands and peoples and directed his efforts towards the establishment of an ephemeral world empire. And in the last analysis this policy was detrimental to the Mongolian state itself.

The brilliant military success of Jenghiz Khan (and his successors) should be attributed not so much to his personal talent as to the weakness and disunity of the environment in which the nascent Mongolian state took its first steps. The only conclusion that can be drawn from our analysis is that Jenghiz Khan's entire activity did very great harm to the cause of human progress

*Voprosy istorii, 1962, 5. Abridged.*

## SOVIET HISTORIANS ON MODERN BRITAIN

Andrew Rothstein

**A**FTER a very long interval, recent years have brought an encouraging increase in works by Soviet authors on modern British history. Apart from numerous articles in the learned journals like *Voprosy Istorii* (Problems of History), *Novaya i Noveishaia Istoria* (Modern and Contemporary History) and others, the following are some books which the writer has seen.

In 1959 the Institute of International Relations published *Ocherki po Istorii Anglii, 1815-1917* (Outlines of English History, for the years indicated), by N. A. Yerofeyev. Intended as a textbook, the work (217 pp.) is a useful guide for the general reader as well—and any visitor to the Soviet Union who has talked with history students, or has attended a class on current affairs at a factory, knows how large is the number of 'general readers' trying to understand why things happen so differently in Britain.

The chapters—from the Vienna Congress to the first Reform Bill, the Chartist epoch to 1848, Britain in the fifties and sixties, the development of imperialism to 1900, the years up to World War I, and the war years themselves—give a good compact summary of events, blending economic development, political struggles and brief sketches of ideology with the minimum of comment.

The bibliography includes not only the relevant writings of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and Russian translations of Holyoake, Gammage, Humphrey and British Marxists like Allen Hutt and Leslie Morton, but also standard works in English by J. H. Clapham, the Hammonds, Halévy, Maccoby, G. D. H. Cole and many others. It will open the eyes of those who still cherish the fond illusion that Soviet citizens are 'not allowed to read bourgeois historians'.

By the same author, in 1961, the Academy of Sciences brought out in its 'Popular Scholarship Series' a 127-page paperback, *Chartistskoye Dvizhenie* (The Chartist Movement). The book is no piece of simple popularisation, however. After two chapters on the pre-history of Chartism—economic and social developments in the thirties and forties, and the political antecedents—there is a chapter devoted to each of the the main stages (1836-8, 1838-42, 1843-7 and 1848), and a special chapter on the movement after 1848. Mr. Yerofeyev has worked hard at contemporary papers and pamphlets, reminiscences and modern works, yet his narrative is never cluttered up with detail.



In the same year the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences published a weighty volume (464 pp.), *Chartism*, which—the editors remark—‘as it were sums up the research into the history of Chartism by Soviet scholars in recent years’, filling a gap which ‘covers the thirty-five years since the appearance of T. Rothstein’s *Outlines of the History of the British Labour Movement*’, (published in English as *From Chartism to Labourism*). The essays contained in the volume represent ‘original research, based on the use not only of sources already used by scholars to a greater or lesser extent, but also all the new sources preserved in the archives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism’. This claim is well sustained by the contents.

V. M. Lavrovsky and V. F. Semyonov begin with an acute analysis of the *Historiography of the Chartist Movement*, the late Academician Kosminsky contributes a study of *The Sources of Engels’s Work ‘The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844’*, and Mr. Yerofeyev discusses the development of capitalism and the formation of the labour reserve army in Britain (including a special section on Ireland). A series of papers deal in original fashion with particular aspects of Chartism—the National Chartist Association, ‘the first political party of the working class, created by the advanced British workers in July 1840’ (A. D. Kolpako), the Chartists and the Anti-Corn Law League in 1842 (A. B. Reznikov), Chartism in 1848 (V. E. Kunina), the Chartists and the general election of 1852, based mainly on Ernest Jones’s newspapers (B.A. Rozhkov), Jones’s ‘People’s Paper’ and the articles written for it by Marx and his friends (V. V. Galkin), and Ernest Jones’s views on the colonial question, especially India, China and Ireland (L. I. Golman). It is to a Soviet historian, Y. V. Kovalev, that British readers owe the first *Anthology of Chartist Literature*, published in English a few years ago (and still available).<sup>\*</sup> This subject is carried farther in the last essay of the volume, by N. M. Demurova, which analyses the literary criticism and æsthetic views of Chartist writers.

Covering a much later period is M. M. Karliner’s *Rabocheye Dvizhenie v Anglii v gody pervoi mirovoi voiny* (The Labour Movement in Britain during the First World War), also published by the Institute of History in 1961. It is worth noting, by the way, that the 487 pages of this work include full indexes of names and topics—unlike the first three books mentioned above, which are much impaired in their usefulness by their continuation of an old and deplorable Russian (i.e. pre-Soviet) tradition in this respect. The indexing of Mr. Karliner’s work makes it more than ordinarily valuable. No single work in English provides anything like such a thoroughly documented account, for the years 1914-8, of the economic situation, government and employers’ policies, the problems facing the trade unions, the working class and the people generally, and the ideological struggles within the Labour and socialist movement.

There are some slips which socialists of that day might easily notice. For example, about the particular issue at the British Socialist Party’s conference at the Easter weekend in 1916 which led to the withdrawal of the group led by H. M. Hyndman (p. 197); the somewhat less than justice done to the debate on the BSP resolutions at the Labour Party conference in January 1917, when the Marxists had returned to that party after fifteen years of self-stultifying isolation (pp. 198, 243-4); or the much-too-brief account of the 1916 Dublin insurrection (pp. 201-2). But these are secondary matters in comparison with the comprehensiveness and well-balanced nature of the book as a whole. In addition to a mass of printed contemporary sources of all kinds, the author has made effective use of the party and state archives of the USSR, never previously drawn upon in this sphere.

Several important studies of British history after World War I can be

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<sup>\*</sup> Central Books Ltd., 413pp., 10/6.

mentioned only briefly here, in the chronological order of the subjects with which they deal. They are *Noveishaya Istoria Anglii* (British Contemporary History), by V. G. Trukhanovsky, editor of *Voprosy Istorii* (Publishing House of Economic and Social Literature, 1958, 591 pp.), *Anglia i Miunhenski Sgovor* (Britain and the Munich Conspiracy), by V. G. Polyakov (Academy of Sciences, 1960, 334 pp.), and *Politika Angliiskogo Imperializma v Yevrope, Oktiabr 1838—Sentiabr 1939* (The policy of British imperialism in Europe, in the period indicated), by A. M. Nekrich (Academy of Sciences, 1955, 289 pp.).

These works are not aimed at the same type of reader, and the date of their publication to some extent determined, for now well-known reasons, the materials available to their authors. Professor Trukhanovsky's work is on a large scale, covers a very wide field of British home and foreign policy, and is based on immense and well-digested erudition. It divides its theme into eight periods—that immediately following World War I (1919-20), the years of great struggles between capital and labour (1921-3), capitalist stabilisation (1924-9), world economic crisis (1930-2), the years of appeasement of the Fascist Powers (1933-9) the first part of World War II (1939-41), the anti-Fascist alliance (1941-5) and the years of the Labour Governments (1945-51). Its restrained style, no less than the subdivision into convenient sections and its indexes, will long assure its position as a work of reference.

Its author wrote before many documents in the Soviet archives had become available. Mr. Polyakov was able to use these to advantage in his book on Munich—in particular, the Soviet diplomatic correspondence of 1938—as well as many special studies on the same subject.

Even more, of course, did the limitations of material affect Professor Nekrich's work on the twelve months preceding the outbreak of general war in 1939. He had very little in the way of Soviet diplomatic papers at his disposal. Nevertheless, he makes an extensive and penetrating analysis of the diplomatic documents of the other Powers, of economic reports, memoirs and other monographs.

It is perhaps not out of place to mention that the Soviet 1939 material has been drawn upon in chapters 15 and 16 of a new work, *Istoria Mezhdunarodykh Otnoshenii i Vneshnei Politiki SSSR, 1917-1939* (History of International Relations and Foreign Policy of the USSR, for the years mentioned), of which the first volume appeared in 1961 (Institute of International Relations, 720 pp.). It contains much on British foreign policy as well, of course.

In 1958 the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences published a small but unique work in quite a different field, no less topical for today than those mentioned earlier. It treats of the conquest of what is now known as Rhodesia, in the years 1888-97. By a coincidence, the Institute of Race Relations in London, in that same year, published Mr. Philip Mason's book on the same subject, *The Birth of a Dilemma*—of which an appreciative review in *The Economist* (November 15, 1958) said that it 'contains little formal history'. A. B. Davidson's *Matabele i Mashona v Borbe protiv Angliiskoi Kolonizatsii* (Matabele and Mashona in struggle against British colonisation, 184 pp.) certainly fills that gap. Using both later monographs and a wide range of contemporary sources (from *The Times* to the Social Democratic Federation's *Justice* and the Independent Labour Party's *Labour Leader*, Hansard and rarely consulted official and missionary reports, many pamphlets of the time and the unpublished Russian imperial archives), the author gives a tightly packed account of the economic and political history of the conquest.

This survey does not pretend to be exhaustive. Some British historians would not like some of the books here mentioned, but no one should doubt that, like them or not, the historians of the USSR are steadily adding original and valuable contributions to the history of Great Britain.



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# THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SOVIET CIVIL LAW

Ekaterina Fleishits

The author is a senior researcher at the All-Union Institute of Legal Studies and one of the senior authorities on Soviet civil law. Born in the Poltava Province of the Ukraine in 1891, the daughter of a Jewish lawyer, she took her degree at the University of Paris in 1907 and passed the law examinations of Petersburg University in 1909. Dr. Fleishits is the author of a number of papers on the obligations arising from the infliction of injury, from contracts and legal relations involving settlement of accounts and credit, etc. She took an active part in the drafting of the new civil legislation of the USSR.

**T**HE Fundamentals of Civil Legislation of the USSR and Union Republics, which were adopted by the USSR Supreme Soviet on December 8, 1961, and came into force on May 1, 1962, were a first and most important step in the revision of Soviet civil law. As their Article 3 says, the Fundamentals will serve as a basis for new Civil Codes in the Union Republics ; and such civil legislation of the USSR and Republics as remains outside the Civil Codes will be brought into conformity with the Fundamentals.

The Fundamentals give Soviet civil law a basic unity by fixing its general principles and establishing the general rules governing the most important types of property and related non-property relations between persons in the USSR. At the same time they open up broad possibilities for the civil law regulation of relations by means of legislation of Union Republics. Article 3 states that, in conformity with the Fundamentals, the Civil Codes and other civil legislation of Republics will regulate property relations and non-property personal relations, whether or not they are specifically dealt with in the Fundamentals.

According to their preamble, the Fundamentals are designed actively to promote solution of the tasks of building communism ; they aim to further the strengthening of the Soviet economy, and in consequence to help raise living and cultural standards, increase protection of the non-property personal rights and interests of citizens, and strengthen socialist legality.

The system of Soviet civil law which had taken shape prior to their adoption was quite complex. The Civil Code of the RSFSR, adopted in 1922 and brought into force on January 1, 1923, was adopted by the other Republics with only slight amendment. In each Republic the Civil Code was supplemented by civil legislation which was not incorporated into the Code. Thus, for example, copyright is determined by the copyright laws of the Union Republics on the basis of the Fundamentals of Copyright of the USSR, 1928. The executive orders of the Councils of Ministers of Republics, regulating their economic life, are also of great importance in the sphere of civil law.

Since the formation of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, and especially since the thirties, many legal acts affecting matters of civil law have been issued by the Union, above all by the Council of Ministers of the USSR in exercise of its jurisdiction in the sphere of overall planning and regulation of the country's economy. Thus, orders of the Council of Ministers determine, among other things, relations in the sphere of delivery of items for production and technical requirements and of consumer goods, relations in the sphere of capital construction, railways, inland waterways, and airlines. In 1945 a Union law established certain new rules respecting the right of inheritance.

The complexity of the system made its purely technical streamlining necessary,

but even more important is the fact that many rules in the Civil Codes were in substance long out of date. The Codes were published early in the Soviet period, during the period of economic reconstruction, when private enterprise was permitted within certain limits. With the victory of socialism in the USSR, those rules affecting private enterprise which had not been repealed lapsed because the social relations which they had been designed to regulate had disappeared. However, it is sometimes difficult to reconcile other rules still in the Codes with the provisions of normative legislation issued since the victory of socialism, and especially with the rules now being established during the building of communist society. For these reasons it became necessary to codify Soviet civil law.

The work of codification was carried out on broad democratic lines : the Draft Fundamentals were worked on not only by the members of the Commissions on Legislative Proposals of the two chambers of the Supreme Soviet and other deputies, but also by the Councils of Ministers of the Union Republics, and officials of many ministries and departments and of the procurator's office, by members of the judiciary, and the staffs of departments of civil law of law schools and institutes of economics, and by many individuals. When the Draft was put up for public discussion in 1960, the Commissions on Legislative Proposals received over 1,000 commentaries and proposals aimed at improving it.

The object of many proposals was to introduce a special rule on the protection of the non-property personal rights of citizens, particularly their reputation and dignity (Article 7) ; others aimed at cementing, by means of a special clause, the connection between the law and the standards of socialist behaviour and social intercourse (Article 5) ; others aimed at improving the law on inheritance (Articles 117, *et seq.*)

In connection with the drafting of the Fundamentals, a broad discussion was started in the law journals and in various legal institutions on the theory of civil law. Some jurists held that civil law should only regulate property relations in which citizens are involved, and that a body of ' economic law ' should be created as a special branch of law and legislation to govern property relations between socialist organisations. This proposal was held to imply a rejection of the unity of the socialist economy of the USSR, all of which rests in fact on the socialist ownership of the means of production and is directed in its entirety by state economic planning. By its growth the socialist economy ensures a systematic rise in the standard of living of citizens and in their cultural opportunities. For that reason the proposal was rejected. The law enacting the Fundamentals, like earlier civil legislation, is an expression of the uniformity of treatment of property relations in the USSR.

The Fundamentals consist of a preamble and eight sections, of which the third, dealing with the law of obligations, is made up of thirteen sub-sections. Section 1, entitled ' General Provisions ', establishes that civil legislation in the USSR regulates property relations and related non-property personal relations between socialist organisations, between organisations and citizens, and between citizens. Among the personal relations connected with property relations are included, for example, the rights of inventors and innovators and the authors of scientific, literary and artistic works, and of scientific discoveries. Article 1 also specifies that civil legislation may regulate personal relations unconnected with property relations, in cases envisaged by law. The Fundamentals themselves contain a rule covering relations of this type : Article 7 states that a citizen or organisation has the right to sue for a retraction of statements damaging to their reputation and dignity, if those disseminating the statements do not prove they have a basis in fact. The method of retraction is decided by the court ; but if the statements have appeared in the press they must be retracted in the



press. In the event of failure to carry out the award of the court, a fine may be imposed, payment of which does not absolve the offender from the obligation to carry out the acts specified in the court order.

Soviet civil legislation does not extend to family relations. These are the subject of a special body of family law, covered by special legislation.

The civil law regulation of property relations, and related personal rights of a non-property character, is shared by the USSR and the constituent republics. The competence of the Union extends to the regulation of relations involving delivery of goods ; relations in capital construction ; state purchases of farm produce from state and collective farms ; relations in the organisation of rail, sea, river and air transport and communications ; the relations of credit institutions with their customers and with each other ; relations in respect of state insurance ; relations arising from scientific discoveries, inventions and industrial innovations ; and such other relations whose regulation is referred by the Constitution and the Fundamentals to the competence of the Union. In these fields, however, matters referred by the legislation of the USSR to the jurisdiction of Republics may be settled by the legislation of those Republics. Foreign trade relations are governed by special legislation of the USSR as well as by the general civil legislation of the Republics as embodied in their Civil Codes.

Article 4 of the Fundamentals, which determines the grounds on which relations arise under civil law, will be extremely important for the development of trade in the USSR. These legal relations may arise from grounds directly provided for by legislation, and from the acts of citizens and organisations which, though not envisaged by law, create civil rights and obligations by virtue of the general principles and meaning of civil legislation. This rule, which excludes, among other things, *numerus clausus* transactions, will undoubtedly play a considerable role in the implementation of the provision in the programme of the Soviet Communist Party concerning the extensive use of commodity-money relations in the period of building communism.

Article 5, which is a development of Article 1 of the Civil Code then in force, will also have considerable importance. It establishes that civil rights are protected by law except when exercised in contradiction to their purpose in socialist society. In exercising their rights and performing their obligations, citizens and organisations must observe the laws and respect the norms of socialist behaviour and the moral principles of a society building communism. The article is designed not only to prevent abuse of the law, but also to strengthen the links between Soviet law and communist morality. Article 6 lists the methods of protecting civil rights, and emphasises the participation in such protection of comradesly courts, trade unions, and other mass organisations. Protection of civil rights by administrative order is effected only in cases specifically provided for in law.

The General Provisions also include rules on the equality of citizens in law and before the law, on the legal capacity of juridical persons, and on the types of juridical person in Soviet law. Juridical persons include state undertakings operating on a financially self-supporting basis, state undertakings financed from the state budget, co-operative organisations—particularly collective farms—and social, scientific and sports organisations. State organisations recognised as juridical persons are independently liable from their assets for their obligations. The state is not responsible for their debts, nor are they responsible for state debts.

The main dicta governing commercial transactions, the conditions under which they may be invalidated and the consequences thereof are also included in the General Provisions, together with a statute of limitation.

The second section of the Fundamentals deals with the right of ownership.

Here we should note above all the clauses establishing the principle that state property is a single fund, those stating the state's exclusive ownership of land, mineral wealth, waters and forests, and those giving a clear-cut definition of the rights of organisations to the state property assigned to them. This property is secured to state organisations to manage, and they possess, use and dispose of it within limits established by law in accordance with their plans and the specified purposes of the property. The planned and specific nature of the property rights of state organisations is thus stressed. Other provisions cover the rights of collective farms and other co-operative bodies to own property, and of those public organisations which are not primarily economic in purposes. As such organisations take over more and more functions at present exercised by the state, there will be an extension of the range of property they possess.

Among the clauses dealing with personal property are those which define the range of objects to which this right—which is of a strictly consumer nature—applies, and others establishing that personal property may not be used as a means to obtain unearned income. Personal property may include one house, earned income, savings, and income from an allotment or smallholding, which is taken to include domestic animals and poultry, an orchard and a vegetable garden. The ground of the house and garden itself is not private property; the land belongs to the state and is made available for use only. Personal property also includes household goods and personal effects and facilities, such as a car, for example.

A final provision concerning ownership establishes that property may be confiscated only as a penalty for an offence in law, and only in such cases and manner as are laid down by law.

The extensive third section of the Fundamentals deals with the doctrine of obligation. It consists of general provisions concerning obligations and several sub-sections establishing rules governing contracts of sale and delivery, lease of property and lease of dwellings, contractors' agreements (for everyday services or capital construction), contracts of carriage and insurance, settlement of accounts and credit relations. There is also a special clause dealing with obligations arising from injury, and another dealing with the obligation to pay compensation for injury arising from a person's voluntary efforts to save public property from danger threatening it.

Of considerable interest is another provision that, as a general rule, guilt gives grounds for liability for non-performance of obligations; in connection with this the guilt of a bad debtor is presumed. Liability regardless of guilt is allowed in cases provided for by law or contract. A debtor guilty of breach of his obligations must pay the creditor both *damnum emergens* and *lucrum cessans*. In the event of both parties being guilty of breach of their obligations, the liability of the debtor is reduced accordingly.

The provisions governing major contracts reveal an expressed desire on the part of the legislature to promote in every way the strengthening of discipline with regard to plans and contracts, and to improvement of the quality of goods produced by undertakings and of jobs carried out by them under contract.

Among the provisions on delict obligations there is one of great political and practical significance, by virtue of which state undertakings are liable for material damage inflicted on citizens by the wrongful acts of their officials in the sphere of administration in accordance with the general rules of law, i.e. when there is guilt on the part of the person causing the injury. The procedure and scope of liability for injury caused by such acts to organisations are to be established by a special law. A special bill is also to be brought in to establish the conditions for liability on the part of organs of inquiry and preliminary investigation, the procurator's office and the courts for injury caused by the wrongful acts of their officials in the exercise of their duty. Other rules on

delict obligations fix the well-established principles that juridical persons are liable for injuries caused by their workers in the exercise of their official duties, that organisations and citizens—irrespective of questions of guilt—are liable for injury caused by sources of increased hazard (e.g. motor cars, mechanical engines, virulent poisons, etc.). Liability for impairment of health and death is dealt with in special articles.

The sections of the Fundamentals dealing with copyright and patents codify some of the rules previously in force in this sphere ; and for the first time there is explicit recognition of the 'right to a discovery' by virtue of which an author or inventor may demand the issue of a certificate of authorship and priority of discovery from the Committee for Inventions and Discoveries under the USSR Council of Ministers, and the payment of remuneration for the discovery.

The law on inheritance has been considerably amended. The Fundamentals establish only a first group of heirs-at-law, which includes the spouse of the testator, his or her children (including adopted children), and his or her parents. Grandchildren inherit by right of appointment. Other groups of heirs-at-law may be specified in the legislation of Union Republics. Persons who have been dependants of the deceased for at least one year before his or her death share together with the heirs of the group on which the inheritance devolves. The heirs of a group inherit in equal shares.

The Fundamentals also establish freedom of bequest. Property may be bequeathed to any person, or to the state or any state, co-operative or social organisation. This freedom is limited only by the compulsory share of minor and disabled children of the testator, and of a disabled spouse, parents or dependants ; these persons inherit, regardless of the provisions of the will, at least two-thirds of the share that would have been theirs under the law if the testator had died intestate. Heirs are liable for the debts of the testator within the limits of the actual value of the legacy. In the absence of heirs-at-law and testamentary heirs—or where none of these accepts the inheritance—the estate of the deceased passes by right of inheritance to the state, which is then liable for the debts of the testator within the limits mentioned above.

The Fundamentals include a section dealing with the legal status of foreigners and stateless persons, and the application in the USSR of the civil law of other states, and of international treaties and agreements. Foreigners and stateless persons enjoy the same legal capacity as citizens of the USSR, but exceptions may be established by a law of the USSR. And the Council of Ministers of the USSR may establish counter-limitations in respect of the citizens of countries where there are special limitations of the position of Soviet citizens in civil law.

Foreign undertakings and organisations do not require any special permission for transactions in the USSR in respect of foreign trade and in the settlement of related accounts, insurances and other transactions with Soviet foreign trade organisations and other Soviet organisations which have the right to enter into such transactions.

There are several articles dealing with matters pertaining to the form of transactions, to obligations arising from foreign trade transactions, and to inheritance where there is a conflict between Soviet civil law and that of a foreign country. These are summed up in the general provision that a foreign law does not apply if its application would clash with the principles of Soviet law and the Soviet system. A final article establishes the important provision of the pre-eminence of international treaties and agreements containing rules differing from those established by the internal legislation of the USSR and its Union Republics.

# Surveys and Reviews

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## THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

D. Durnov

IN the autumn of 1959 there was, as customary, a special issue of the *Times Literary Supplement*. Each year, as autumn approaches, when perhaps the cooling temperature inclines people to meditation, the *Times Literary Supplement* comes out thicker than usual in a voluminous special issue under a general heading. The special issue contains a long list of articles, sometimes more than a score, devoted in different ways to one problem. 'Books in a Changing World' and 'British Books around the World' have been the themes of particular symposia of recent years. The discussion as a rule has an air of anxiety and is seemingly prompted by the need to consider urgent and complicated political, social and cultural changes. In the autumn of 1959 the subject for discussion was 'The American Imagination, its Strength and Scope' (November 6, 1959).

'The American Imagination'—to Russian ears that phrase sounds odd; it means apparently what we would call the characteristics of the national talent. The *TLS* touched on the achievements of the Americans in literature, art and the humanities. The first of these articles—'More than Enough There'—was about the popularity of American literature in England. In it an attempt was made to trace the interpenetration of the realistic and romantic trends in American literature, and the works of Hemingway were examined as an example of a good combination.

The title of the second article was 'The Characteristic Form'. It was concerned with the 'distinct predilection for the short story' of American writers. In the third article—'The Limits of the Possible'—the most essential general features of American literature were reviewed. The fourth article—'Eternal Verities'—was about American poetry.

In the autumn of the following year a special number of the *TLS* came out once again, this time headed 'British Imagination—Trenchancy and Tradition'. In it a number of articles were about literature; their authors tried to throw light on different aspects of the present-day literary process. There were articles about autobiography and about religious tendencies in the work of English writers; and, as already emphasised in the title of the article 'The Reticent Faith', these tendencies, according to the *TLS*, were not strong enough. Two articles entitled 'Signs of an All Too Correct Compassion' and 'The Workaday World that the Novelist Never Enters' had pride of place.

The tone of the sub-titles—'Strength and Scope', 'Trenchancy and Traditions'—set the mood of these issues. After paying due attention to the strength and originality of American literature, the English critics acknowledge that they had been a considerable time in doing so. 'Up to now', ran the article 'More than Enough There', 'the Englishman has not seen American literature as a sufficiently distinctive thing for him to devote himself to it as a separate area of study. For one thing, it is written in English. What more natural, therefore, than to consider such American writers as recommend themselves to him as part of English literature?' It is not surprising, it is noted with irony, that Richard Chase's slight book *The American Novel and Its Traditions* (1957) was regarded in England as one of the first attempts to trace the development of a

literature whose history has had a duration of almost 300 years. The irony is justified in that there exist the weighty researches of Van Vik Brooks, V. Parrington's *Basic Currents of American Thought*, and a number of others which became well known inside America, and beyond her boundaries, more than a decade ago.

Better late than never. But, at the same time, it is impossible not to note that the 'tardiness' and the positively rapturous recognition of American literature by the *TLS* looks very odd. Surely the Supplement has recorded favourable comment in its time on the most important phenomena in the literary life of the USA. For example, 'What is going to be done with this talent, so hard, so sensual, so unsentimental, so easily comprehending and describing every sordidness of the flesh and spirit, so proudly rising to the heights?' asked an English critic rhetorically in a review thirty years ago in the pages of the *TLS* (July 24, 1930) on the subject of Thomas Wolfe's book *Look Homeward, Angel* (1929). At that time the *TLS* correctly noticed this landmark in the history of American twentieth-century literature. Have they really scarcely written of Faulkner and Hemingway in England so far? Is it possible that the British critics' attempt to disentangle 'the intertwining of realistic and romantic tendencies', for instance, is being made for the first time? Surely Norman Nicholson, in his *Man and Literature* (London, 1944), and Shaun O'Faolain, in his *The Vanishing Hero* (London, 1956), have already noted different trends coming together in American literature as well as the characteristics peculiar to her heroes.

The British are greatly irritated by the political casualness of the United States. On the other hand, certain, literally 'backward', Britons cannot forgive the loss of prestige which the North American colonists brought to the Empire in the distant past, when they resolutely dispensed with its guardianship. Recent political cynicism clashing with decayed snobbery has undermined the relationship between these two historically related peoples. And suddenly, as if prejudices were cast aside, wrongs are not remembered.

The anonymous author of one of the articles in the issue about 'British Imagination' (September 9, 1960) is cunning, and proposes that his readers should measure the passing of time not by socio-political epochs (World War II, Labour coming to power, the fall of Labour, Suez, etc.), but by far less definite upheavals. But undoubtedly, whatever the character of the changes recorded, they are so very significant for recent decades that the outlook of any group—be it radical, conservative, sceptical, ironical—though not catching (let us say) the sense of the individual political crises will all the same, by some sign or other, be aware of these changes. And because it is the intention of the *TLS* to give American literature a friendly, or rather a patronising, pat on the back at a time when Britain is feeling the heavy hand of American politics upon her, an unexpected transition from sheer neglect to unmeasured rapture is extremely significant.

The English discuss themselves with less heat. The editor of the *TLS* himself makes a self-critical gesture, having taken a general epigraph of the British imagination from the writings of H. A. Taine and Henry James, in which the former reproaches the English with a dislike of theory and the latter with an inability to look at themselves ironically. In the discussion one cannot fail to note an attempt to upset the validity of those opinions. Indeed, it is a long time since the English have had such a pointed discussion in English literary criticism.

In the special issues of recent years, 'Books in a Changing World' (August 15, 1958) and 'British Books around the World' (August 7, 1959), the critics were seeking the various external reasons and circumstances which, in the opinion of the *TLS*, were hindering the development of English literature. The reason, it turned out, is not only that the cinema and television are inexorably squeezing out the book, nor that the political disunity of 'East and West'



prevents the distribution of English publications. It seems that the literature of recent times—its themes, the range of its problems, the mode and scope of its influence, i.e. the whole bag of tricks put together during the first half of the century—is clearly doing itself in. The possibilities of its descriptive and receptive forms, mastery of which began half a century ago, have become blunted or exhausted.

The *TLS* does not recognise this straight out. But now and then in the restrained tone of the discussion on national 'trenchancy and traditions' distress signals can be heard. 'The English tribe', writes the *TLS*, 'today is in a divided and puzzled situation.' This division, in the opinion of the paper, has had a bad influence on literature. Writers do not manage to reflect, or find that they cannot, the complexity of socio-political changes. Therefore the reproaches to English poets for their 'provincialism', to the novelists for their reticence, to the dramatists for their immaturity, are not accidental. In an article on poetry, the *TLS* quotes with sympathy an extract from a 'left' Cambridge undergraduate magazine: 'Poems continue to be written, but too much from force of habit rather than any conscious determination to present experience in a new way, to alter people's habits of thought and feeling. . . . There may be sensitivity, there may be wit, there may be high spirits, but there is no tension, no insistent personal rhythm forcing upon us a living imagination.' Inner stagnation, anæmia, sluggishness—the *TLS* sadly writes of this in particular.

'The British Imagination' is laid bare by an article on autobiography in English literature. The problem is a private one, but its analysis has significance. The author of the article is worried that autobiography, a literary form that is usually prevalent in Britain, has greatly diminished recently. Writers eager to talk about themselves have lost the ability to see the movement of an epoch in the development of a single life and to attach social significance to the individual. They are 'an age which loves to observe itself but has little sense of focus'. An even harsher judgment adds to this reproach to the autobiographers: 'Our memories are cluttered with nannies, tea under the limes, the sound of bat on ball, and witty Oxford conversation.'

There is a cursory reference to the young English playwright John Osborne—one of the 'angry young men'—in the article on autobiography. And this is not by chance. His Jimmy Porter (*Look Back in Anger*) in this connection angrily recalls the picture that serves as a prop for the traditional presentation of their country: 'bright ideas, bright uniforms . . . slim volumes of verse, crisp linen, the smell of starch'. 'What a romantic picture', he says, 'Phoney, too, of course.' The general tone of the article 'British Imagination' is summed up in the feeling of a collapse of tradition. Recent autobiographies, trying to preserve this mouldy tradition, are complete failures from the point of view of social interest.

The author of the article on English memoirs regrets the loss of the objectivity that Samuel Pepys brought to his famous diary in the seventeenth century by not blunting his memories of great events with trifles. He considers that subjectivism (at the end of the nineteenth century) dealt a fatal blow to this genre. Thus the author places the whole blame on subjectivity. But it is by no means always detrimental to biographers. Was subjectivity a hindrance to Boswell, the most important biographer in English literature? 'I shall set down my various sentiments and my various conduct', he wrote at the beginning of the *London Diary*, 'which will be not only useful but very agreeable.' He was extremely subjective. He also apparently behaved with inexcusable flippancy, concentrating on transitory impressions of everyday life while ignoring important events. But his outlook and philosophy of life retained a clear and consistent definition, and although his observations appear on the surface to be as

fragmentary as a mosaic that does not prevent them from having an inner sense of value and proportion.

The fact is, it would seem, that many contemporary English writers, and not only English ones for that matter, lose this sense of value and proportion in their subjectivity. It is impossible not to notice a love of life's complexities in their autobiographical works. Therefore the method of 'an exact reproduction of an impression of a bygone age' is very hard to justify nowadays.

The *TLS* does not confine itself to the sphere of workaday and moral problems, or to literary techniques, in its search for what is wrong with contemporary English literature.

'The Workaday World that the Novelist Never Enters' is the title of the basic article, as it were, of the special issue on British imagination. In this article the narrowness of the special horizon of contemporary English writers is remarked upon. C. P. Snow confines himself to the technological intelligentsia; Graham Greene writes mainly of the 'world of crime'; but where, asks the author of the article, is there a place in literature for those who work day in and day out and who constitute the foundation of society? Contemporary English writers avoid touching on the problem of the class divisions of society, postulates the *TLS*; and while urging them to observe life as broadly as possible it advises them against the tradition of 'social realism'. This paradox is characteristic. 'Our own fiction', it was said the previous year in the issue on the American imagination, 'is deeply rooted in society; man for the English novelists is social man . . . and though the society may be criticised or rebelled against, it remains inescapable. . . . This is not to say . . . that the hero of the American novel exists in a social void. . . . Society is there in the American novel, but the role it plays is essentially different from the role in English fiction.'

If one places side by side the comparative analysis of American and English literature given in the *TLS* in 1959, and the contradictory discussions and arguments on the limited social outlook of contemporary English literature printed in the same paper in 1960, one then realises the predicament that James Aldridge wrote about in *Literaturnaya gazeta* (October 22, 1960). 'Our readers and writers', he emphasised, 'avoid like the plague the social abyss opening before them, for they do not know what they will find on the other side.'

Recent novels of Graham Greene—*The Quiet American* and *Our Man in Havana*—are not connected with the 'world of crime' but with contemporary politics. That is not the only point, however. For some time, in particular since that slight novel *England Made Me* (1935), Graham Greene has been writing not only about crime but about vice in the more significant sense of the word. It is important that the conservative critics who noted with particular pleasure Greene's honesty in his 'reserved' theme now express dissatisfaction with it. Apart from that, it is curious that the *TLS* advises only novelists of the older generation—C. P. Snow, Graham Greene, Anthony Powell—to widen their outlook and take a look at the 'workaday world'. The *TLS* is afraid, as it were, that recent hotheads like A. Eastly, F. Callow and S. Stein—young novelists who have each published a book based on working-class life—may do it more resolutely.

While urging English writers towards social activity and social criticism, the newspaper at the same time makes reservation, warning them against 'social realism'. The *TLS* is, as it were, speeding the process of renovation of literature, while looking with fear on the demands of youth. It is not by chance that it is noted with pleasure in one of the articles in 'The British Imagination' that 'many of the poets most admired in Great Britain in recent years seem . . . to have sidestepped the influence of "modernism"'. The *TLS* is prepared to criticise 'modernism', but only on the grounds that it involuntarily discloses

the defects of bourgeois society. That is the fundamental contradiction in the position of *The Times*.

'It is, and has been for a long time, the most prized of our national possessions : a sense of humour' says a writer in 'The British Imagination'. Another reproaches English novelists for a lack of religious feeling ; a third advises poets to read more poetry on the wireless and the stage rather than to count on it being published—prescriptions that are in various degrees justified. But among them there is not yet a far more essential one : to catch up with the social, political, scientific and cultural phenomena of this epoch.

*Voprosy literatury*, 1961, No. 2.

## Books

### MUDDLED ECSTASY

**A Funny Man's Dream.** Fyodor Dostoevsky. (FLPH. 334pp. 9/-. Obtainable from Central Books.)

**B**BETTER known perhaps as *The Friend of the Family*, it is the tale here given its correct title of *Stepanchikovo and its Inhabitants* which occupies about three-quarters of this collection of four of Dostoevsky's stories. The manor of Stepanchikovo is the pre-emancipation setting for a semi-tragic, semi-farcical display of contorted futility in the snake-pit of that 'Dostoevskian existence' which has been said to be no longer possible in Russia. By playing upon the ascendancy he enjoys over the mother of a weak-willed landowner, who for that reason is compelled to harbour him in luxury on the estate, the monster Foma Fomich spends his days nourishing his principal passions at the expense of his kindly host. These passions—spite, vindictiveness, Pecksniffian unctuousness and rancour, and all of them insatiable—he pursues in systematic moral torture of the whole household like some obscene thing. Such characters may seem incredible, but further reflection reveals the author's skill in presenting not only the psychological truth, but the very necessity, or inevitability, of such monstrous individuals, given the social and economic opportunity for them to flourish.

Dostoevsky's Foma Fomich is strongly reminiscent of Saltykov's Judas Golovlyov, and such specimens were nurtured by the very system depicted. Dostoevsky's genius, however, for putting his finger on the secret springs of the most inflamed psychological aberration ensures that his characters, although seeming so fantastic on first acquaintance, are dealt with justly, so that we accept them not merely as entertaining but as credible human beings at the mercy of circumstance. 'Who knows', he says of his figure of evil, 'perhaps this monstrously bloated pride is just self-respect, false and perverted in the bud, which may have first

been insulted in childhood by oppression, poverty and filth or, even earlier, spat upon in the parents, in his own presence perhaps. Foma had been oppressed; he had been the victim of caprice—and he began to victimise others.'

*A Funny Man's Dream*, the 1916 translation of which by J. Middleton Murry and S. Kotliansky was recently republished in this country under the title *The Dream of a Queer Fellow*, is important as showing Dostoevsky at grips with the ineffable. It is a short, rhapsodic attempt to reconcile the real with the mystical ideal, and becomes entangled in a fog of muddled ecstasy.

Two other short stories, *Our Man Matvei*, which is autobiographical, and a marital nightmare called *The Meek One*, concerning an innocent bride at the mercy of her crazy husband, complete the volume.

W. S. BAILEY.

### PUZZLING TONE

**A Starry Ticket.** Vasilii Aksenov. (Putnam. 224pp. 15/-)

**T**HROUGH the eyes of Viktor Denisov, a twenty-eight-year-old physicist, we first meet his younger brother Dimka and his group of jazz-loving, near-*stilyagi* friends. They set off on a self-consciously unplanned expedition along the Baltic seaside resorts, where Dimka's girl friend, Galya, is seduced by an actor and abandoned, to return chastened. The point of view shifts from that of Viktor, and the final section, which includes the mysterious death of Viktor on some mission to do with space flight, is told by Dimka himself. His thoughts start to follow those of the elder brother he both admired and resented.

The tone is lightly bantering, and a blurb tells us that the book was strongly attacked for its irreverence and 'hateful slang' by some Soviet critics, while welcomed by others for its 'lively realism'.

I found the tone puzzling. Most of the opening seems to be concerned to make the

Soviet Union safe for jazz, jeans and beards, but deeper themes are hinted at in an account of manoeuvres by conservatives to keep Viktor's thesis from being read. The light style of the book is against carrying such a serious conflict, which involves none of the characters except Viktor, and the author drops it.

One does not like to criticise the work of a translator who has had quite exceptional difficulties, but the slang here is neither 'hateful' nor 'lively' but often just ludicrous: "Sorry, old bean", said Viktor, "but I really want a serious talk with you . . ."; "Cough it up then," I said . . .; "You're a live wire, and no mistake . . .".

Some passages seem expected to call forth an oo-la-la reaction: 'It was a great day when a boy's old battle-axe went out. Then the telephone certainly got busy. Demure school-mates in skirts then came round. There was dancing. There was sudden switching off of lights. And the girls squealed . . .' 'He had got back from Paris, where he had flown to a Unesco meeting. I was not going to refuse a French cigarette. Who would? There was a picture of a cock on the packet and the words *Gauloise bleue*. . . They were frightfully strong cigarettes. . . As I reached the door he offered me another cigarette. I'd like to see the man who would refuse a second *Gauloise bleue*.' Tastes differ. The speaker is Viktor, a man of twenty-eight. There must be a better way *pour epater* the Soviet bourgeois bureaucrat than that!

However, the young rebels are seen benevolently, and they themselves turn to and end up working hard in a fishing collective, black jeans, beards, abstract poetry and all. The production of beatniks is evidently one field in which no attempt will be made to overtake and surpass the West.

D. C. WALLIS.

## ARMENIAN CHILDHOOD

*Scenes from an Armenian Childhood.* V. Totovents. Trs. M. Kudian. (Oxford University Press. 182pp. 15/-.)

**V**AHAN TOTOVENTS, an Armenian writer of great repute, wrote this study of his childhood in 1930, some seven years before his early death at the age of forty-seven. The youngest son of a well-to-do farmer and official, he spent his youth on a farm in the province of Kharput, which now forms part of Turkey. Though his father died when the boy was only eight, his influence is clearly felt, and, in spite of the impression that he was a very authoritarian man, he seems to have gained not only his children's respect but also their love. One of the most moving episodes in the book is the description of the little boy's bewilderment when his father orders his coffin, has it made to measure and insists on lying down in it 'to try it out'.

To one familiar with the time and setting of this work one thing will predominate in the mind: the massacres, the terrible reprisals of Turk against Armenian which shocked Europe. Surely any autobiography of this period should relate tales of the horror of the massacres, and show the indelible impression they had on the mind of a youth. But Totovents, in his narrative of a happy and very close family circle, prefers rather to prove that to a child who knew love and security such things were too remote to come within the compass of his emotional experience. He only implies knowledge of the atrocities by veiled references expressed in rather poetic terms, as a child might overhear adults talking of it: 'The blue canopy of heaven has collapsed on all that; it has collapsed like the turquoise dome of an ancient church during an earthquake.'

The introduction of the household is gradual, and each has a chapter to himself before joining the others in the general theme of the book, rather like a musical theme which is exposed by itself prior to becoming a part of the grand swelling climax. First Totovents's mother, of whom he says: 'There have only been two Christians in this world: one was Christ himself, a Jew, and the other my mother, an Armenian.' The Bible regulated her life, and her implicit obedience to her husband's wishes has a definitely biblical aura to it. But despite this, she had a will of her own, and ran her household and her children with equal gentleness and firmness, insisting on supervising everything personally, in spite of her husband's desire that she should be a lady of leisure. 'My father was a stubborn aristocrat; my mother a stubborn democrat', says Totovents. So, with subtly emphasised descriptions of the great influences in his life, the author creates a picture very different from that we are now accustomed to reading about in childhood reminiscences of this generation, when discontent is fashionable, and cold self-analysis of a self that was yet embryonic is the form of autobiography most appreciated.

Rarely do we get the chance to read good prose in translation, and a good share of one's thanks for enjoyment of this work must go to Mr. Mischa Kudian for his success in retaining the exquisite lyrical style and in losing none of his personal appreciation of the family and countryside of this most beautiful part of former Armenia, an appreciation which one senses not only through the words themselves but in the atmosphere of the book. This made the reading of it not only a pleasure, but also a delightfully refreshing experience, reminiscent at times of Wordsworth's *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood* in the depiction of dawning awareness and perception. It is to be hoped that we shall very soon be able to further our acquaintance with this author, who could be a new and invigorating aspect

of the writing men of genius of a country which was also the progenitor of William Saroyan and Zabelle Boyadjian.

ANNA C. KHACHADOURIAN.

## POETRY OF GEORGIA

**Anthology of Georgian Poetry.** Trs. Venera Urushadze. (State Publishing House 'Soviet Georgia'. 2nd edition. 289pp., illus. Unpriced.)

**D**URING the last few years, artistic events such as the appearance of the Georgian Dance Ensemble at the Albert Hall combined with the warm welcome extended to British visitors in Soviet Georgia have created in Britain the image of a high-spirited and talented nation, brimming over with creative vitality. This impression is sustained by Mrs. Venera Urushadze's anthology of Georgian poetry in English translation, of which the first edition, on a rather smaller scale, appeared in 1948. The volume is noteworthy as the first attempt to make Georgian poetry accessible to western readers since the days of Arthur Leist in Germany and Marjory Wardrop in England some fifty years ago.

The selection opens with extracts from Shota Rustaveli's romantic epic 'The Man in the Panther's Skin', in which the translator makes a brave effort to reproduce in English the sophisticated metre and rhythms of the original. The eighteenth century is represented notably by several of the poems of David Guramishvili, while the early-nineteenth-century romantics are headed by the young and tragic bard Nikoloz Baratashvili, a drama based on whose life is currently drawing large crowds to the Rustaveli Theatre in Tbilisi. Ilia Chavchavadze is featured by several poems, including 'The Hermit' in Marjory Wardrop's rendering, while it is a pleasure to meet again Akaki Tsereteli's immortal elegy 'Suliko'. The virile and impassioned nature poetry of Vazha-Pshavela (1861-1915) is strongly represented.

When we come to the Soviet period we encounter a galaxy of talents, not by any means of equal merit. Among the best are Galaktion Tabidze and the ever-genial Giorgi ('Gogola') Leonidze, together with the lyric poets Paolo Iashvili and Titsian Tabidze, the last two being among the purge victims of the Stalin-Beria criminal repressions. The volume ends with a short selection of folk poetry, including the 'Lay of Amirani', brief biographies of the poets, and notes.

It is difficult to do justice to the tireless devotion with which Mrs. Urushadze has worked over the years to interpret Georgia's poetry to the English reader. Many of her renderings show a rare delicacy of touch, sensitivity of feeling and real poetic insight. Again, the vigorous heroic ballads are rendered with energy and effect. If occasionally the muse seems to have recourse to some of the outdated conventions of Victorian

romanticism, we must realise the obstacles which confront a translator working single-handed and in isolation, cut off from the well-springs of living English poetry, and be grateful indeed for so much that is good. The introduction by Mikheil Kveselava gives a brief survey of the evolution of Georgian poetry from the earliest times, but is rather nebulous when it treats of the Soviet period.

One must hope that when a new edition is called for the biographical notes on the poets will be radically revised, and that we shall be spared such naïve remarks as those about 'putrescent [*sic*!] West-European art' (page 261), which can do nothing to further the important cause of Anglo-Soviet understanding.

DAVID M. LANG.

## DIGGING UP RUSSIA'S PAST

**Archæology in the USSR.** A. L. Mongait. (Penguin 'Pelican'. 320pp., illus. 5/-.)

**S**OVIET archæology has made important advances in the post-war period, and with the wide interest in archæology which has grown up of recent years in Britain the Soviet achievements are assured of an interested audience. The Penguin *Archæology in the USSR*, by A. L. Mongait, thus comes opportunely along and should do a first-rate job in whetting appetite for yet more. In such a huge field it is not at all easy to produce a coherent account, sufficiently detailed and yet keeping a clear pattern; and on the whole Mongait has done the work excellently.

The theoretical comments are not so adequate. Archæology, working fundamentally with material objects, can hardly help being materialist in its approach, concerned primarily with the concrete details of daily life and work. The question has merely been whether the materialist attitude is to be mechanist and superficial or to become fuller in its grasp of the social whole represented by the objects and to advance into comprehensive concepts of human development.

Generally, in the comparatively brief period of its existence, archæological science has seen a steady forward movement of effective interrelations and generalisations. There is little then to be gained by sharp oppositions of 'bourgeois' and 'Marxist' positions here. Mongait was himself responsible for mud-slinging in 1951, at the height of the later Stalinist period, and a few touches from that period are still to be found in his book. But, for the inter-war years, there is much to be said for an archæology led by Gordon Childe rather than one dominated by Marr. And Mongait himself rightly berates some of his colleagues for being more interested in forcing material into a set scheme of periodisation than in examining a culture concretely for its full



characteristic factors. He himself is not altogether free from the wish to fill out periodisation schemes at all costs; he thus talks loosely of 'slave-holding' societies. Either that phrase means nothing at all, since all ancient societies held a certain amount of 'slaves', or it means a society with a slave-economy—that is with slaves at the key-points of production. He calls Urartu a slave-holding state; but I should very much doubt that it had a slave-economy. (The same ambiguity appears in saying that 'a large part of the inhabitants were enslaved'. Everything depends on the exact nature of the servile status and what it entailed in social and productive relations.) He says of the Greek settlement Tyitace in the Bosporan kingdom that 'the pressing of grapes was done here by slaves'. How does he know? In Roman Egypt the papyri show us all vineyard work being done by free wage-labour; and, though conditions in Egypt were of a special kind, the example serves to show that one cannot use slaves and slavery in this blanket way.

Mongait also shows touches of the unnecessary inferiority complex that still afflicts Soviet historians in their defensive comments. He ends his chapter two with the proud statement that Soviet archaeologists have established 'the undoubted fact' that 'the culture of the most ancient population of the country did not fall below the level of culture of any other areas occupied in the Old Stone Age'. And like every other Soviet historian he considers that it is enough to deny to demolish the excessive Germanic claims about the role of the Norsemen in early medieval Russia, and that there is then no need to discuss just what that role was. Such an evasion is a blot, for example, on the otherwise admirable book by M. Tikhomirov *The Towns of Ancient Rus*.

But, having made these criticisms, one must return to the generally admirable nature of Mongait's clear exposition of the very varied picture of Soviet archaeology. With its vast space the Soviet Union has enormous possibilities as a field for archaeological investigation, from Palaeolithic days onwards; and already the discoveries are of remarkable interest. We may point to the large-scale excavation of palaeolithic and neolithic sites in the loess soils of south Russia, the earth houses of the mammoth hunters and the Tripole villages, the rich burials at Trialeti in the Caucasus and the frozen burials in the Altai, the bronzework of the Caucasian area, the documents in various languages from the castle on Mug Mountain, and the extensive work in the Novgorod area. All these and many other matters are fascinating in themselves and are largely new to the western reader. Every year now the Soviet peoples are adding new finds, and as the picture unfolds our knowledge of prehistory and early history is being importantly added to. Soviet publications

on the various fields continue to increase, and it is surprising, in view of their excellent quality and the great interest in archaeology here, that so far we have little but what this book made available. Mongait should, however, excite curiosity and lead to further translations. Here the work has been done extremely well by M. W. Thompson.

In contemplating the scale of the work by Soviet archaeologists and the generous help they are given by the state, I could not help contrasting the conditions here. In the middle of reading Mongait I received the appeal for funds being sent round by the Council for British Archaeology about the gravels of Welland valley, where there are sites ranging from the neolithic to Anglo-Saxon times. Here the archaeologists have to struggle desperately 'not to impede gravel working', which, being profitable, cannot be held up. 'The process cannot be stopped', says the leaflet. It is just such sites as this that the large-scale excavations of the USSR are applied to, and there 'the process can be stopped'.

JACK LINDSAY.

## SOCIALIST PLANNING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

**Value and Plan: Economic Calculation and Organisation in Eastern Europe.** Ed. G. Grossman. University of California Press and Cambridge University Press, 1960. 370pp. 56/-.

AS its sub-title, 'Economic calculation and organisation in Eastern Europe', suggests, this substantial (and expensive) work deals with the changes in theory and methods of planning in the socialist countries over the years from 1953 to 1958, the year when the papers contained in it were delivered to a California symposium. Of the fourteen main contributors ten are American, two British, one Yugoslav, and one an economist from the United Nations. All the comments on the contributions are from Americans, of whom three are workers at the Rand Corporation. With the exception of one sociologist who discusses the cultural and political setting, all the articles are by economists.

The introduction by the editor, Grossman, and the paper on 'The Soviet debate on the law of value and price formation', by Zauberman, contain a general survey of the issues. As one American reviewer of this book has observed, the qualities until recently required of the 'Sovietologist' were a knowledge of the language and persistent detective work rather than economic analysis. The above two articles are not untouched by this trend, whereas the two theoretical articles of Ward and Hurwicz go to the other extreme in their abstraction from Soviet reality. Mr. Wiles's article is, as usual, pungent and stimulating, even if one disagrees. One feels that he is familiar with those developments that have taken place in the theories of western economists

looking at problems of monopoly and of growth, which make discussions about the relative merits of a 'command' economy (this has apologetic overtones) as compared with a 'market' economy (without specification as to whether it is a capitalist economy, and one with monopolist distortions) under conditions of static resource allocation seem rather *vieux jeu*. Too many works have appeared in the West about criteria for choice of investment variants in underdeveloped countries under dynamic conditions for any serious theoretical discussion to ignore the work, for example, of Dobb, Bettelheim, Sen, Mahalanobis or Leibenstein. Yet the only references to the last-named American scholar and to Bettelheim do not come in the main two articles at all. True, the other work has appeared since the papers were written; perhaps this is a measure of the rate at which development of theory and practice takes place in this field. In Poland and the USSR much work has been done also over the last two years on input-output analysis, on linear programming, and on opening up the development of material-and-value balances for conditions of growth and technical progress as well as in order to take account of the new problems of inter-sectoral links that arise from the decentralisation of 1957. Perhaps the lessons here are, first, that a two-year time lag between writing and publication of papers is too long in fast-developing fields and, second, that more economic analysts are needed.

The remaining essays are by well-known American 'Sovietologists' (including Campbell on accounting, Hodgman on monetary controls, and Hunter on transport costs and problems of industrial location). There is much useful material and comment here, including substantial references to the literature (as indeed there is, in varying degrees of detail, in the notes that follow all the articles). Kaser and Bicanic comment on the administrative and planning framework respectively for the USSR and Yugoslavia. In both the theoretical and applied sections a notable omission is of any paper specifically on the planning of a not unimportant scarce resource, labour, and its price.

While there is not much that was not in essence available to the diligent student of the journals (in English), and while there are important contributions which are under-represented here, it is none the less a useful collection, especially for the expanding number of undergraduates who are beginning to study Soviet institutions.

It is perhaps inevitable that any such volume should have expressions of emotional attitude. When they appear as such no one is going to carp, but when they begin to invade what purport to be statements of fact a word of caution is in place. Professor Grossman's dictum that 'property incomes

in money or in kind are of course relatively less important in the "socialist" countries' must surely be the understatement of the year.

R. BELLAMY.

## THE LAW OF NATIONS

**International Law.** Ed. Prof. Kozhevnikov. Trs. Dennis Ogden. (FLPH. 480pp. Unpriced.)

**I**N the present state of international tensions it is doubtful if any study can be regarded as being of greater importance than international law, for if disputes between nations are not to be resolved by war they must be settled by law. Now particularly the appalling possibilities opened up by the first alternative can only lead all progressive mankind to work and hope for the strengthening of the rule of law in international relations. Indeed, the avowed policy of the Soviet Union, the peaceful co-existence of states with different social structures, can only be achieved within an appropriate juridical framework adequate to settle the disputes and frictions which must inevitably arise between states with different social philosophies. It is doubtful whether traditional international law is capable of fulfilling this task, for during the three centuries before 1917 not only was there no state in existence based on the political and social presuppositions of Marxism, but there was even much doubt and hesitation whether states or peoples not professing Christianity could be regarded as full members of the international community, and although for most purposes Turkey came to be accepted reluctantly as an equal the position was felt to be anomalous.

The emergence of the USSR and the people's democracies on the one hand, and of independent Moslem and African states on the other, has caused a great deal of re-thinking of the traditional concepts of international law, and the book under review is a most valuable work for all who wish to know the results of the reappraisals which have been conducted in the USSR.

It is not, of course, suggested that international law as taught and practised in the western world has remained immobilised in a strait-jacket of pre-1914 concepts; this is far from being the case, but as the standard textbooks available in English devote so little attention to the Soviet theory and practice of international law this book is particularly welcome. Professor Kozhevnikov and six other Soviet specialists in this field have contributed chapters to the book, and it is a tribute to the editor's skill that there is very little repetition; indeed, the book reads very much as though it were all from the same pen. The first two chapters, dealing with the sources and history of international law, are by Korovin, a leading Soviet expert who has been writing on international law since 1923, and these are of especial interest, for much of the historical

material which deals, for example, with the treaty relations between Kievan Rus and Byzantium is not easily accessible except to experts. Another valuable feature of the book is the fullness with which certain aspects of international relations during the post-war period are dealt with, and the Soviet view is well argued.

While much of the book consists of the straightforward exposition of generally accepted principles of international law, one would not expect that all the ideas or principles expressed would meet with ready acceptance from international lawyers in the West. In particular the principle that unequal treaties are not binding needs considerable elaboration if it is to rank as a valid and acceptable postulate of international law; it could hardly be applied without reservations, for then peace treaties would have no value or binding force, as the vanquished *ex hypothesi* cannot be the equal of the victor. Again, the principle that 'peoples' as distinct from states can have rights under international law can hardly be expected to commend itself without reservations to imperialist states, for it leads to the conclusion that a war for the liberation of a subject people is a 'just war'. However, the Soviet position on this point has been greatly strengthened by the declaration of the United Nations on December 14, 1960, on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples (which must have been made after the book had gone to press, as it is not referred to), for the declaration was carried by eighty-nine votes in favour with none against, nine states abstaining; these included the USA, Great Britain, France, Belgium, Spain and Portugal. It is a pity that these more controversial matters are not worked out in greater detail—indeed, they are not even stated to be controversial—for clearly they are vital to the progressive development of international law in the modern world. In particular the very difficult question of the 'just war' is treated in a sketchy and inadequate manner. Another point to which more attention should have been devoted is the problem of the relationship between international law and national law, especially in the event of a possible conflict; this vital point should not have been shirked simply by dismissing certain 'bourgeois' theories on the matter.

The book states that it is 'a textbook for use in law schools', and this seems perhaps its least useful function. While admirably suited to the needs of the general reader who requires an outline knowledge of international law as understood in the Soviet Union, or as vacation reading for a law student before the term in which he commences the serious study of the subject, it can hardly be regarded as a satisfactory textbook or 'course' in international law for the law student; there is insufficient detail, and the study of the book would constitute neither an intellectual discipline

nor a training in the application of legal principles to international relations. If Soviet law students use it for their courses on international law it is to be hoped that they supplement it with more substantial fare; they are, however, offered a good deal of guidance here, for there is a very full bibliography of books and articles in Russian on all aspects of international law. It cannot therefore be compared with Starke's *Introduction to International Law*, a standard English textbook of about the same length, as a law student's textbook; but it does have one most useful feature for the serious student: a series of charts or diagrams illustrating matters such as the structure of the United Nations Organisation, and the different kinds of international treaties. The use of visual aids to law teaching has been highly developed in the USSR, and these diagrams show what can be done in this respect.

The book has been very well translated. The only real mistranslations are in connection with international arbitration, where the term 'super-arbitrator' is used instead of 'umpire', and where the term 'compromise' is used to denote an agreement to arbitrate (in English books on international law the French term *compromis* is often used in this sense, but not 'compromise', which suggests something quite different). Kashmir and Ecrehos are spelt in unorthodox ways, and the word 'baronetcy' is used in an unorthodox sense; also there are one or two passages where one feels that the original has not quite come through in the translation—I cannot think that these distinguished authors believe that Andorra is a vassal state in the same sense that Serbia was before 1878. There are perhaps half a dozen misprints.

These minor criticisms are not meant in any way to detract from the welcome that should be given to this book as one of the few translations of Soviet legal works available in English. It is sincerely to be hoped that others will follow.

E. L. JOHNSON.

## SLAVONIC STUDIES

*Oxford Slavonic Papers*, Vol. X, 1962. Ed. S. Kononov. (Clarendon Press, OUP. 158pp. 21/-.)

ONE always turns with pleasure and profit to this annual collection—the only one of its kind produced by an academic press in the English-speaking countries which is not marred by a snarling anti-Soviet undertone (not always an undertone either). In half a dozen other journals one can think of, the articles on 'Lev Tolstoy as Man and Artist' (an Ilchester lecture by Professor Poggioli) and on 'The Language of Muscovite Russia in Oxford Vocabularies' by Professor Unbegaun—containing a hard-hitting but courteous polemic with a Soviet colleague—would have been the occasion for spiteful

irrelevances (not, of course, from these authors !). As it is, one remains in an atmosphere of scholarly serenity throughout.

Professor Walicki's lecture on 'Turgenev and Schopenhauer' and V. S. Pritchett's on 'Leskov' are models of their kind. So is Dr. Swiderska's paper on a Polish diplomat who sought Henry VIII's support against the Teutonic Order in 1522—interviewing (in Latin) first Cardinal Wolsey and then the king himself. Professor Konovalov again publishes important papers throwing light on Anglo-Russian relations, this time after the Restoration, from which both sides hoped for more than they got. There are reports on Prince Prozorovsky's embassy to England (1662-3), on the return embassy of the Earl of Carlisle to Muscovy (1663-4) and on a second Russian embassy, that of Vassili Dashkov, to London in 1664-5. The documents throw a curious light on the conduct of an English nobleman in a country where he was sure (thus early) that the people would not fight a foreign invader, 'being cow'd with slavery and jaded with poverty'. For more modern times there is a selection of letters which passed between the notorious Prince Meshchersky—extreme reactionary and later supporter of the Black Hundreds—and members of the Romanov family over the years 1867-1913 : first the Grand Duke Alexander, son of Alexander II, and himself from 1881, Alexander III, and then Nicholas II, for whom Meshchersky drafted several official documents. A number of the letters have more than anecdotal interest, and there is a full annotation by Mr. L. Vinogradoff.

ANDREW ROTHSTEIN.

## STARS AND OUTER SPACE

**Reaching for the Stars.** G. Tikhov. 152pp., illus. 2/6.

**Space Laboratories.** G. Zhdanov, I. Tindo. 197pp., 24pp. illus. 6/-.

**Our Atmospheric Ocean.** N. Kolobkov. 330pp., illus. 12/6.

(FLPH. Obtainable from Central Books.)

TRANSLATIONS of scientific books from the USSR, produced in English by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, are always welcome. The three new volumes are well up to standard, and provide an interesting contrast in style and in technical level.

*Reaching for the Stars* must represent the last scientific work by Gavril Tikhov, whose recent death at a very advanced age is deeply regretted. Basically, it is divided into two parts; the first deals with Tikhov's own personal story, and the second with his studies of what has become termed 'astrobotany'—the nature of living organisms on other worlds.

Tikhov gives an account of his life which is as interesting as it is modest. The present reviewer, who has spent only two weeks in the modern Soviet Union, was fascinated by

the description of an upbringing in Tsarist Russia; and Tikhov paints an excellent picture of conditions as they were then. Particularly attractive is the way in which he gives full credit to those who helped and encouraged him—such as Byelopolski the astronomer, who was already eminent when Tikhov was unknown. The author emerges as a straightforward, sincere personality.

Not everybody agrees with Tikhov's conclusions in the field of 'astrobotany'; after all, we cannot yet prove that the darkish areas on Mars are due to living organisms, though it does seem highly probable. At any rate, Tikhov spent an immense amount of time on his research. Whether his results are valid or not must await further investigation; but his studies were well worth while, and the second section of the book gives an excellent non-technical account of them. All things considered, this is a particularly interesting book which will appeal to a wide variety of readers.

*Space Laboratories* is also very good. It is, of course, decidedly more technical, but this is in the nature of the subject, since the authors are dealing with space research with special reference to the recent rocket and satellite results. Chapter 1 is entitled 'Pioneering the Way to the Stars'; then follow 'Deep in the Sea of Air', 'Hot' and 'Cold' Sun, 'Geography in Three Dimensions' and 'The Borderland between Geophysics and Astrophysics'. A great deal of information is given in a most competent manner, and the present reviewer has not detected any major errors or omissions. The translation, by V. Triumfov and L. Bobrov, is pleasingly smooth. This book, too, will be widely appreciated, and will be useful to laymen and serious students alike.

The one real weakness is that the emphasis is almost wholly upon Soviet achievements (though there is a tribute to the work of the American scientist James van Allen). Nobody is likely to question the remarkable triumphs of Soviet science during the last few decades, but it is only right to mention others as well. If, for instance, it is maintained that Popov invented wireless—and the present reviewer does not intend to start a new argument!—the authors might at least have mentioned Hertz. The only other specific point of criticism concerns the Moon picture showing the region of the craters Archimedes, Aristillus and Autolycus. It is labelled as a photograph, but it is most definitely not a photograph, and looks very like a picture of one of James Nasmyth's plaster models. It must, of course, be stressed that these criticisms do not detract appreciably from the value of the book, which is a welcome contribution by two highly competent Soviet scientists.

Total emphasis on Soviet work is also the only weakness of the third book under review, Kolobkov's *Our Atmospheric Ocean*. Some of the semi-political comments will cause British readers to smile; but they



are not important, and it must be said at once that the book itself is a really first-class introduction to a study of the Earth's atmosphere. The author writes extremely well, and has been well served by his translator, George Yankovsky. An immense amount of information is given; there are also details concerning historical events associated with meteorology, and the book is detailed without giving any impression of being crowded.

The first part, 'The Atmosphere', serves as an introduction, and contains chapters on atmospheric electricity and upon thunder and lightning. In Part II we come to 'Storms': thunder, rain, wind and, finally, a short but most interesting section upon the effects of large cities on local climate. There are descriptions of meteorological disasters of the past, but these are only supplementary to the main theme, which is to give a general and comprehensive account of what the storms are and why they occur. The comments upon preliminary attempts at weather control are also most informative and valuable, and the author is certainly right when he says that an encouraging start has been made, even though the work is still at a very early stage. The last part of the book is relatively short, and is headed 'Extraordinary Phenomena in the Earth's Atmosphere', notably rainbows, haloes and auroræ.

*Our Atmospheric Ocean* deserves wide popularity, and it is clear that Kolobkov is an excellent authority on his subject. There are a few minor errors, but these are trivial; a typical case occurs on page 75, where the polar explorer Malmgren is said to be Norwegian (actually he was Swedish). There are a few similar instances in the book, as well as in the other two under review, but to list them would be pointless, as none of them may be regarded as at all important.

In all three books the print and presentation are good, particularly with Kolobkov's, and the illustrations are well up to standard, apart from one rather poor drawing of Mars in *Reaching for the Stars*. Yet another pleasing feature is that the books are produced at a price which is very low by British standards.

It is clear, then, that the Foreign Languages Publishing House is doing a real service by selecting good Russian books and producing them in English; otherwise they would remain unavailable to most British readers, which would be a great pity. It is to be hoped that further volumes of the same nature will be produced, and that they will maintain the high standard of the present three.

PATRICK MOORE.

## LUNAR REVELATION

**The Other Side of the Moon.** USSR Academy of Sciences. Trs. J. B. Sykes. (Pergamon Press. 36pp., illus. 10/6.)

ALTHOUGH only 18 months later man himself ventured into space, the third

Soviet space rocket of October 1959 remains unique, both as an artificial satellite and as a feat of radio and television transmission. This book tells of a significant leap forward in the history of astronomy when, for the first time, speculation is replaced by direct investigation.

Little imagination is needed to see such a satellite as merely a first step which opens up limitless possibilities. The older methods of investigation have held the field for so long, however, that apparently earth-bound telescopes have produced earth-bound astronomers. Indeed it is perhaps significant that some present-day astronomers and mathematicians, notably our own Astronomer Royal, like the high priests of old, seem to be anxious to minimise the importance of his revolutionary advance into the field of direct investigation.

This little book is clearly illustrated. As far as a layman can judge it is generous with information and excellently translated. The chapters deal with the design of the automatic interplanetary station, its orbit (a fascinating chapter), the photography and image transmission (including the methods of checking the photography), and lastly with the unseen side of the moon itself.

The reader will be more than ever convinced of the essential importance of technical advances in extending human knowledge.

G.C.C.

## SOVIET GEOGRAPHY

**Glimpses of the USSR.** Nikolai Mikhailov. 198pp., illus. 6/-.

**From Pole to Pole.** Nikolai Mikhailov. 198pp., illus. 6/-.

**The Russian Federation.** Yevgeny Maslov. 214pp., illus. 6/-.  
(FLPH. Obtainable from Central Books.)

PRACTICALLY every economic geography book is out of date before it is published. Not so, however, Mikhailov's *Glimpses of the USSR*, which not only gives us a vivid up-to-date picture of the Soviet Union, but, moreover, clear factual detail of economic development and progress up to 1965, the end of the current seven-year plan. With so few up-to-date and interesting textbooks on the USSR, this will prove invaluable to the student. In spite of being crammed with facts and figures it is most readable if taken chapter by chapter (it is not a book to be read at one sitting); and it is most attractively illustrated with an abundance of mostly good, appropriate photographs.

*From Pole to Pole*, by the same author, is an absorbing and exciting book. Mikhailov conveys vividly to the reader his unbounded enthusiasm for travel and knowledge. As his journey from pole to pole progresses, he shows how beautiful and interesting the world is in its natural features and its ancient



history. He also dwells sadly on the imperfections we see in man-made society in some parts. But his great message to his young readers is that the world is small: that it is ours to get to know and to organise in the best possible way; and that sympathetic contact between peoples everywhere is of prime importance.

One becomes very interested in the actual progress of the journey from north to south, and it is a pity that the author digressed at Naples to take us on a brief trip through the countries of northern Europe.

This book is obviously meant for young readers—perhaps ten-to-thirteen-year-olds—yet there are too many historical and literary references which could mean nothing to the average child.

The production is attractive, but the photographs are disappointingly badly reproduced. Nevertheless, in spite of these shortcomings, it should prove popular reading for the intelligent curious child.

Yevgeny Maslov's *The Russian Federation* is a difficult book to read. The serious student of economic geography will find many useful facts and figures of production, mainly up to 1957, but for the general reader the repetitive comparisons of pre-revolution figures with to-day's—especially in the first section of the book—and the catalogue of details throughout make reading tedious and laborious.

The author has given much interesting historical and physical background, but in a heavy style. Some sections where he enthuses in superlatives over natural resources can be irritating.

For close, detailed study, most of the maps showing the economic development of small regions are useful, though the distribution maps of the first section are too small and generalised. The book is generously illustrated with quite well-produced photographs, many of which, however, are not of very great interest.

P. DAVIS.

## TALES OF TRAVEL

**Kukushkin: A Geographer's Tales.** V. A. Obruchev. Trs. Vera Bowen. (Constable. 268pp., with maps. 21/-.)

FROM the wealth of travel books now being published the reader looks hopefully for an author who can do for geography what a Bryant or a Trevelyan has done for history—write geographical literature. At first sight here is a book which appears to do this—it is reminiscent of Sven Hedin and *Desu the Trapper* of Arseniev; but the promise is not fulfilled.

Throughout a long and active life, the distinguished Russian geographer V. A. Obruchev explored and studied thoroughly extensive areas of Asiatic Russia and its borders. As late as 1926 he mapped accurately for the first time a whole range of mountains in eastern Siberia. He may have felt the need

for a literature of geography, for he wrote a number of books of 'geographer's tales', which have been very popular in Russia. This is the first to appear in English, effectively translated and given an appropriate Swiss Family Robinson flavour.

The book consists of descriptions of nine journeys organised and undertaken by Kukushkin, who is supposed to produce the record after he has retired. From their centre at Chuguchak on the Russian border Kukushkin and his companions make journeys through central Asia to trade with Mongolians and Chinese, to seek treasure and to undertake some rather haphazard archaeological investigation. As Peter Fleming points out in his foreword, Obruchev succeeds in making his characters come alive, and Kukushkin stands out as a man of personality and resource.

The nine journeys cover a considerable variety of country with desert or semi-desert predominating. Each chapter is preceded by a clear map and there is close attention to detail. The geographer looks out through the eyes of the narrator. We are given general descriptions of the natural vegetation and its scantiness, of the appearance of lakes and mountains, carefully named, but also much clear detail of gold working, of the overwhelming of cities by drifting sand, or of methods of irrigation. Sometimes it seems that the author is conscious that the trader-traveller is not an academician, and expected information is suppressed. Never is there any real geological or geomorphological detail—rocks are always described by colour or hardness or shape.

But description is skilfully enlivened by conversation and action; the dramatic climax comes properly near the end of the book. The son of Kukushkin's assistant, Lobsin, absconds from the caravan, flees to Lhasa and joins a llamasera. He is about to be immured as a hermit when Lobsin rescues him through the corruption of the monkish jailer.

Here is a book which skilfully blends fact and fiction. The information thus pleasantly presented may serve to stimulate fresh interest in the great central Asian travellers of the past who wrote so vividly of their experiences.

D. W. SHAVE.

## HOW LIFE BEGAN

**Life: Its Nature, Origin and Development.** A. I. Oparin. (Oliver & Boyd. 207pp., illus. 21/-.)

THE appearance in 1924 of Professor Oparin's first book on the origin of life on the earth was a great event in the development of biological theory. It was the first time that anyone had been able to give a reasonable, scientific and coherent account of how living things could have arisen, without supernatural intervention, in accordance with known laws of the material world and

in the actual conditions believed to exist on the earth millions of years ago. Since that time much additional evidence from many different branches of science has accumulated, all tending to confirm the substantial correctness of Oparin's original explanation. His basic ideas are now widely accepted, and were restated in the light of the most recent evidence in a second edition of *The Origin of Life on the Earth*, published in English in 1957.

The present work covers the general ground of his earlier book, but is a more popular and less technical (although equally fundamental) statement, clearly written for the general reader possessing only the intelligent layman's background knowledge of science. It may also be fairly said to be a more personal statement, in which the author, while claiming no finality or monopoly of wisdom, and mentioning different points of view, gives his own mature unified conception of how life arose, changed, and developed to its present state. This gives the book an excitement and fascination not always found in scientific writing. The amateur and the expert will be equally stimulated and absorbed by the simplicity of style and the depth and significance of the thought.

Oparin begins by discussing the nature of the distinction between life and the non-living, and shows that this can be defined and understood only by studying the origin and history of living things. He then considers the conditions prevailing on the earth in the most distant past and shows how a multiplicity of organic substances probably arose, and how spatially delimited (coacervate) systems of open reactions could develop, representing the beginning of the most primitive organisms. This is followed by a brilliant discussion of the origin of specific biological laws and the subsequent development of the varied forms of life we know today.

The translation of Anne Sygne is impeccable.

A. G. MORTON.

## PHYSICS FOR FUN

**Physics for Entertainment.** Y. Perelman. (FLPH. 211pp., illus. 7/6. Obtainable from Central Books.)

FOR a lot of people, physics, like Shakespeare, is something that they 'did' at school and never subsequently. Any curiosity they may have had about the subject has been dismissed with the thought that any book on it would be unreadably difficult, mathematical and out of this world. Such has never been really the case, and this translation of one of Perelman's many popular books on science makes it even less so.

In the first place it is very readable, including lengthy quotations from the classical sci-fi writers like Jules Verne and H. G. Wells. The chapter on perpetual motion machines is very comical: what a delightful

comic film could be made from the material in it!

Then there is no mathematics, though there are plenty of numbers and quite a lot of calculations—as there certainly should be, for physics surely is that place above all others where Hegel's quantity and quality constantly meet and change places.

Finally, it is not at all out of this world. Indeed, it is not even in a laboratory or back room, for the physics dealt with is very much that of everyday life. It is the physics of how we walk, how we get up from a chair, how to write in a moving train, how to jump and dispose of luggage from a moving vehicle, where to sit in the cinema, how to detect forged signatures, how to look at photographs, why certain pictures stare at you wherever you are.

Not all experiments in physics require laboratories and expensive apparatus. For the reader who likes to try out experiments this book gives enough suggestions for simple ones to keep him busy for many weeks; with tissue paper and pin the flow of heat from the hand can be demonstrated; inky splashes with fascinating shapes can be made on rotating cards; burning glasses can be made not only from water but even from ice.

The chapter on vision deals with stereoscopy and optical illusions. Perelman claims that with practice people can see 3D effects in stereoscopic drawings without the use of a stereoscope. The optical illusions shown are well chosen and there are plenty of them. Perhaps it was the work of putting all these illusions into the book which puzzled the printer so much that he confused 'up' with 'down' when putting figure 5 into the text. The mistake he made there somehow does not jar but gently calls attention to the excellence of the production of the rest of the book.

J. C. SIDDONS.

## RUSSIAN FOR MATHEMATICIANS

**Russian Reader in Pure and Applied Mathematics.** P. H. Nidditch. (Oliver & Boyd. 166pp. 10/6.)

MATHEMATICS is the language of science, and its methods, symbols, and generally also the terminology—based on Greek or Latin—are international. Contrary to first impressions, reading mathematics in Russian is not therefore such a Herculean task for the technical reader acquainted with the main features of written Russian. The present book, perhaps in conjunction with a good technical dictionary, should provide him with a fair pair of crutches for hobbling at some speed through most texts.

It consists essentially of a collection of extracts from recent Soviet textbooks on pure and applied mathematics, with interline word-for-word English translations. Examples deal, for instance, with analytical methods of real and complex variables

including Dedekind cuts, continuity, periodic functions, contour integration, and so on. Algebra, projective geometry, sets and matrices, number theory, topology, non-Euclidean spaces, statistics, equations of mathematical physics, and many other subjects are represented.

The examples have in each case been chosen to include the most characteristic terminology, and short notes on points of usage or grammar are given after almost every one of the 100 sections. The book, which appears in the University Mathematical Texts series, is well produced, and should be of considerable assistance to the mathematician who wishes to keep up to date.

PAUL FELTHAM.

### MATHS CIRCLE READING

*Inequalities.* P. Korovkin. Trs. Halina Moss. (Pergamon. 60pp. 10/-.)

THESE 'popular' lectures would seem to be part of the extra-curricular mathematical activity so strenuously fostered in the USSR. The standard would grace any mathematical sixth form here.

Beginning with the simplest algebra, an amazing number of theorems and methods are displayed.

From the basic theorem, on page 8, that if the product of  $n$  positive numbers is unity their sum is not less than  $n$ , he deduces elegantly that  $A$  is not less than  $G$ . Many standard (and not so standard) inequalities are derived, leading to the exponential limit, properties of the 'exponential mean of order  $n$ ', the convergence and sum of the alternating harmonic series, and the divergence of the harmonic series of powers not greater than 1.

To sum the series for  $\log 2$ , it would be interesting to know what definition of the logarithm was being assumed.

Some pleasing applications to maxima and minima are included.

The proofs, with their meticulous scrutiny of special cases, are models; they would inspire any sixth former. Every teacher should buy a copy; indeed, so should all boys (and girls) who can afford the ten shillings—a high price for this small monograph.

May we get many more such treats. Yet we would beg the publishers to change from typescript to print. The page face looks pleasing, but the reproduction is often broken, and, at crucial points, indecipherable.

M. P. MESHENBERG.

### HEAT FOR STUDENTS

*Heat Treatment of Metals.* B. Zakharov. (FLPH. 295pp. 12/6. Obtainable from Central Books.)

THIS is essentially a textbook suitable for students at the technical college and university level. All current heat-treatment processes, as well as some less frequently

## New Russian Reader from USSR

KHRESTOMATIYA  
PO RUSSKOMU  
YAZYKU

A. F. KONOPELKIN  
Moscow University, 1962  
Boards; 575pp., illus.  
12/6

THIS new reader, specially prepared for foreigners studying Russian, is now available from Collet's. It contains a generous selection of graded reading material which will prove of great value to the serious student and teacher of Russian.

THE aim of the compiler has been to build up the student's vocabulary and grammar gradually, while offering texts on a wide variety of subjects which give an idea of life in the USSR now and in the past, and of Russian culture and literature.

PART of the book consists of literary passages—well-chosen pieces of classical Russian literature, both prose and verse, together with some examples of Soviet poetry. This section itself constitutes a valuable 200-page anthology of Russian literature.

Collet's

44-45 MUSEUM STREET  
LONDON, W.C.1

used, such as sub-zero treatments for the removal of retained austenite in martensitic steels, are described, and the structural changes are discussed.

Emphasis is understandably on Soviet practice, although this is mainly identical with comparable techniques in any other technologically advanced country. Steels and cast irons are treated in considerable detail, as is, of course, appropriate in view of their leading role in metallurgical production; but the industrially important copper-, aluminium- and magnesium-base alloys are also adequately treated. The writing is clear and to the point; the diagrams have been kept simple, and are used effectively.

The difficulties of translating technical literature are formidable, and it would be amiss to dwell at length on minor shortcomings and blemishes, although some are somewhat irritating. Thus on page 18 we read that the specification 'P' is derived from the English 'rapid', which must be rather puzzling to most English readers; nitrates are referred to by the alchemist's term 'saltpeter' (page 105), and Guinier-Preston zones are described as 'Guignet-Preston' on page 287.

The book is competently written, and deserves a wide circulation, particularly as there does not seem to be a comparable textbook of such wide scope—and at such a reasonable price—available in the English language.

PAUL FELTHAM

## INTRODUCTION TO RUSSIAN VERSE

**Russian Poetry for Beginners.** Ed. Eleanor C. Aitken. (Bradda Books. 64pp. 4/6.)

ANY enterprise attempting to involve the student of Russian, at however early a stage, with the literature of the country whose language he is studying seems worth while; any attempt deserves success that gives him even a glimpse of the delights awaiting anyone with the patience to master the difficult grammar and vocabulary of Russian.

*Russian Poetry for Beginners* is just such an enterprise, and succeeds admirably in giving a selection of verse within the range, if not of a beginner, at any rate of anybody with a good knowledge of the elements of the language.

From the practical point of view there is no better way of understanding the subtleties of Russian stress than by learning to recite poetry aloud and by heart; all the phonetic rules in the world are no match for the instinctive understanding of stress that must result from a substantial effort to learn many of these verses by heart.

Criticisms of selection are inevitable in an anthology, which must always be a very personal affair. But one looks in vain for Chukovsky, surely very much at home in this kind of selection. And errors of proofing are not far to seek—*lyubimy* for *lyubimoi* for

example, in the Pushkin poem beginning *Ya vas lyubil*, and *radost'yu* for *robost'yu* in the same poem. These are nevertheless superficial criticisms—the important thing is that books of this kind for the use of schools and adult students are beginning to be published in increasing numbers.

LALIA MAY.

## EDUCATIONAL ANALYSIS

**Sistema narodnovo obrazovanya v Anglii**  
(The English Educational System). V. S. Aransky and V. P. Lapchinskaya. (Academy of Educational Sciences of the USSR. Unpriced.)

IT is always interesting to read a serious assessment of our educational system by foreign educationists, and this one is no exception. The authors are research workers attached to the Department of Contemporary Foreign Education at the Ushinsky Education Library in Moscow, and they have studied the subject thoroughly. One has merely to look at the bibliography at the end of the book, which occupies over twelve pages and includes four pages of English titles, from official Ministry and other documents, political statements of all parties, to books written by well-known British educationists.

The book has fourteen chapters, dealing with every aspect of English education from nursery school, through infant, primary and secondary school, to higher education. It includes private, public and preparatory schools as well as the state system, and also deals with day continuation schools and other forms of further education. There is a chapter on teacher training.

The authors give a very clear analysis of our educational system as can be gathered from every source save from personal experience. Because of this, the extraordinary, really unique feature of English education has been missed. I mean the fact that there are so many exceptions to every statement that can be made about our system. For example, the authors state at the bottom of page 48 and top of page 49 that secondary modern schools do not lead to higher education. Yet it is a fact that a certain number of such schools in various parts of England have had many successes in the GCE examination and have sent pupils on to teacher training colleges and other places of higher education.

In their summing up at the end of the book, they naturally look at our system from a Marxist point of view. This can be a talking point for all those of us who are interested in the further development of our schools and universities, and form the basis for serious discussions with our own as well as with our Soviet colleagues.

DEANA LEVIN.

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